

he got game

An
Original Screenplay

by
Spike Lee

40 Acres And A Mule Filmworks Inc.

2nd Draft
WGA East # 107465-00

OPENING CREDITS

WHITE TITLE ON BLACK: he got game

MUSIC: AARON COPELAND'S FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MAN

IMAGES: WE SEE images of basketball courts all over the United States of America. WE SEE rims nailed to the sides of barns in wheatfields in Kansas. WE SEE milk crates nailed to brick walls in Philadelphia. WE SEE NBA baskets in the driveways of wealthy homes in Beverly Hills, California. WE SEE rural and urban basketball courts. WE SEE basketballs fly through space in SLOW MOTION, it looks akin to a big orange planet orbiting the sun. WE SEE fingers as the orange sphere leaves it. The fingers are long, short, fat and skinny. The fingers are black, white, brown. The fingers caress the orange object before it is flung, pushed, chucked, shot towards the target. The target is the rim. WE SEE basketball rims, some with nylon nets, some with chains for nets, some with ripped, weather-beaten raggedy nets, most with no nets at all. WE SEE the orange sphere fall out of the blue heavens towards the rim, it is in SLOW MOTION. The arc of the ball is perfect and true. The orange sphere falls gently into the net without even touching the metal rim. SWISH. WE HEAR that glorious sound. SWISH. MUSIC to the ears of anyone who has played basketball. SWISH. Nothing but net. SWISH. WE SEE CLOSE UPS of bent wrists, shooters hold their hands with the followthrough. The hands are big, small, black, white and brown. Technique is good, technique is awful, regardless WE SEE hands in SLOW MOTION shooting that "rock," shooting the "pill," shooting a "j," shoot the ball. SHOOT. SHOOT. SHOOT. BALL. HOOPS. BASKETBALL.

END OPENING CREDITS

EXT. PLAYGROUND - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

1

WE SEE a basketball court, it is called THE GARDEN. A tall, lanky high school kid JESUS SHUTTLESWORTH (18 years old) is launching NBA three pointers. Each shot is dead on, the kid can shoot.

EXT. ATTICA STATE PENITENTIARY - DAY

2

A group of inmates are shooting the rock. One comes to our attention. His form is true, unlike the others who are heaving shots up as if they are throwing a discus.

CLOSE - JAKE SHUTTLESWORTH (mid 40's)

He looks like an athlete or at least he use to be in his younger days. The way he shoots is effortless. His shot is soft to the touch, his inmates compliment him on his accurate shooting.

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

3

Jesus is now running up and down the length of the court practicing his crossover dribbling. It is obvious he can control the ball. He has handle with both hands. It's like the ball is like a yo-yo to him, it's on a string. Up and down, back and forth, and side to side. Jesus runs his ball handling drills.

EXT. ATTICA COURTYARD - DAY

4

WE SEE a PRISON GUARD who looks down closely from his tower; he has a high powered rifle. The inmates are playing a pickup game now. Jake is dominating. Nobody can hold him, nobody can stop him, only the prison guards.

PRISON GUARD BOOKS
Shuttlesworth!

Jake takes a final shot. He hurried it and the ball clanks off the rim. His first miss.

PRISON GUARD BOOKS (contd)
Shuttlesworth!!!

Jake runs over to the prison guard.

PRISON GUARD BOOKS (contd)
Your game is over. Warden wants to
see your ass now.

The inmates who have stopped playing look at Jake as he is escorted away.

INT. PRISON - DAY

5

Prison Guard Books leads Jake through hallways, stairs, past various gates.

CLOSE - JAKE

A worried look is upon his face.

JAKE
Do you know what's this about?

CLOSE - PRISON GUARD BOOKS

PRISON GUARD BOOKS
Nobody tells me nuthin'.
I don't want to know nuthin'. They
tell me to git you, I git.

ANGLE - CORRIDOR

Jake and his escort walk down a long, dark corridor. It looks like they are walking into a black hole.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

6

Jake stands before WARDEN WYATT, an elderly looking man. In fact he looks more like an English professor than a prison warden, but on occasions looks can be deceiving.

WYATT

Thank you, Books, you may wait
outside till we are done.

Books leaves. Jake is looking all around, trying not to be nervous. He's doing a bad job.

WYATT (contd)

Jake, please have a seat.

Jake sits down, hands clasped in his lap.

He is looking at Jake, giving him the more than once over.

WYATT

I was told you were on the court.

JAKE

Yes, sir. I try to stay fit and
trim. Keeps my mind occupied.

WYATT

As you already know you picked the
right recreation. Dr. James
Naismith knew what he was doing.
It's a great game, isn't it?

JAKE

Yes, sir, it is.

WYATT

You've played some.

JAKE

When I was young.

WYATT

I coach my grandson's team.

JAKE

I usta run a neighborhood center.

WYATT

You coached?

JAKE

No, nothing like that. If I saw a kid out on the court and I thought he needed some tips I would give it. Fact is, most of the kids today don't want you to tell them nuthin. They think they know it all. All they want to do is dunk. Their fundamentals are sorely lacking.

WYATT

That's strange. I haven't had that problem yet.

JAKE

Maybe those kids are smart, they know where you work and where they'll end up, with me in here, if they don't listen to you, the Prison Warden.

They both get a laugh out of that.

WYATT

Jake, you may be right. I never thought of it like that ... Did you vote for Governor Parnell?

JAKE

I've never voted.

WYATT

No matter. What does matter is that the Governor is a big, huge, fanatical basketball fan. He also played varsity for 4 years at Big State, good not great athlete. He's the biggest booster Big State has. He bleeds red and white.

JAKE

I've read about that, even seen him on television at some of their games.

WYATT

Do you have a son named Jesus Shuttlesworth?

JAKE

I do!

WYATT

Is your son considered to be the number one high school prospect in these United States of America?

JAKE

Some have him rated that high, some don't.

WYATT

Oh, c'mon, Jake. Don't be modest. You should be proud. Proud as a peacock.

JAKE

I've always been proud of my son, even before he developed into the number one high school prospect in the whole wide world.

WYATT

So you're not modest at all.

JAKE

Only when I have to be, sir.

WYATT

The Governor is requesting that your son Jesus Shuttlesworth strongly consider enrolling at Big State -- his alma mater. When you persuade your son Jesus to do that, the Governor has given me his word he will do everything in his power to cut your time, your life behind bars considerably.

JAKE

The Governor can do that? He can cut my sentence? The judge threw the book at me. I got 5 to 15 maximum.

WYATT

Yes, he can. Yes, he will.

JAKE

Is this for real?

WYATT

You will make the Governor very happy. He has a great reputation for never forgetting people who have done right by him. On the other hand he has never forgotten people who did him wrong.

JAKE

Sir, but what can I do behind bars, behind prison walls? Something like this can't be worked out on the phone, or by a letter. Plus Jesus and I still have some issues. Or should I say, he has issues with his father.

WYATT

You are his father. He is your son. He will listen to his father. We have to start right away. The NC two A deadline for kids to declare is one week away.

JAKE

One week?

WYATT

Seven days.

Jake stares at the smiling portrait of Governor Pernell that hangs behind the Warden's desk.

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

7

The Prison Guard Books escorts Jake back down the long dark corridor.

WYATT (VO)

It's all been arranged. Everything has been worked out. Uphold your part of the deal, deliver your son and Governor Pernell will do his part.

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

8

Hundreds upon hundreds of inmates are eating their prison slop under the watchful eyes of many prison guards.

Jake sits among his friends eating that slop also. They talk, laugh.

WYATT (VO)

You won't be missed here.

CLOSE - JAKE

He is shoveling that slop down his mouth.

WYATT (VO)

Not at all.

INT. JAKE'S CELL - NIGHT

9

Jake is rolling on the concrete floor of his prison cell. He is holding his stomach, a nuclear war is going on up in there. He is holding his gut, crying out to the heavens, crying out to God, to the prison guards, somebody, anybody to help him.

WYATT (VO)

Please excuse the food poisoning.
It will just be temporary, for 24
hours at the most.

ANGLE - JAKE'S CELL

The prison guards rush into the cell and put Jake onto the stretcher. He is still crying out in agony.

ANGLE - PRISON FLOOR

As Jake is whisked away, the prisoners are in an uproar. They throw stuff from their cells at the guards. Even above that din, WE STILL HEAR the screams of Jake.

INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

10

DOCTOR CONE looks over Jake. It takes several guards just to hold him down.

WYATT (VO)

We apologize for the pain but we
couldn't depend upon your acting
abilities. There is little margin
for error.

Warden Wyatt rushes into the infirmary.

WYATT

Doc, what is wrong with this
inmate?

DOC CONE

It seems to be food poisoning.

WYATT

Are you sure?

DOC CONE

I haven't had time to run tests
yet.

WYATT

I want this inmate quarantined
immediately.

DOC CONE

It just looks like he ate some of
this fine prison cuisine.

WYATT

I can't take a chance. The last
time this happened, half
of the entire prison population
got sick. He's quarantined
now, he's contagious.

Suddenly all of the prison guards cover their mouths, and
take two steps back from Jake.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

11

Jake lies in the back seat of a State vehicle. Metal
divides him from the two people in the front.

CLOSE - JAKE

Jake is still in pain. He moans. He groans. He holds his
stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

12

Jake sits in front of Warden Wyatt, his hands are clasped in
his lap, he fidgets nervously.

WYATT

One last thing. Please don't try
any funny business. No shenanigans
or the deal is off.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

13

WE SEE TWO PAROLE OFFICERS in plainclothes in the front.

WYATT (VO)

Two Parole Officers have been
assigned to you.

CLOSE - SPIVEY

SPIVEY, who drives, is a mid 30's, bespectacled Afro-
American male.

WYATT (VO)

Spivey is a black man. You should
like him. He should like you.

CLOSE - CRUDUP

CRUDUP rides shotgun. He's a Caucasian male and looks a lot
older than Spivey even though they're the same age.

WYATT (VO)
Your other chaperone is Crudup.
He's quiet. But as
my father told me, it's the quiet
ones you have to watch.

WE HEAR moans and groans in the back from Jake.

SPIVEY
Can't you make him shut up?

CRUDUP
The guy is in pain.

SPIVEY
Give him something, please. We got
two more hours to go and I don't
want to hear it.

ANGLE - CAR

Spivey opens a small slot on the metal divider and tosses a
bottle of Mylanta on Jake's body.

CRUDUP
Drink it.

Jake turns over and grabs the bottle. He quickly opens the
cap and gulps down the contents in one swig.

WYATT (VO)
Spivey and Crudup, two of the best.
Personally handpicked by me.

Spivey and Crudup peer over their shoulders at their cargo
in the back seat.

WYATT (VO)
You will check in with them daily.
They do have the green light to
shoot if you try to run.

Jake looks at his drivers.

JAKE
You're Spivey and Crudup? I'm sick
as a dog.

SPIVEY
We don't give a shit about you, or
you being sick as a dog. If you
have to throw up, let us know --
we'll pull over. You barf back
there, my main man Crudup will see
(MORE)

SPIVEY (contd)
to it that you lick it all back up.
Every drop. You understand?
Capece?

JAKE
Capece! Can you pull over?

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

14

The State car pulls over to the side of the highway. Crudup gets out and opens the back door so Jake can vomit.

EXT. O'DWYER GARDENS - NIGHT

15

O'Dwyer Gardens are a low income level building complex in Coney Island, in other words -- THE PROJECTS. Joining O'Dwyer are Coney Island and Gravesend Houses. They are inhabited by African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, stuck on the end of Brooklyn, on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Besides crime, Nathan's hot dogs, the Boardwalk, the Wonder Wheel and the beach, Coney Island is famous for basketball. Year in, year out, Coney Island produces the best ballplayers to come out of New York City. Every season is a harvest, a new crop to be picked clean by the top college basketball programs.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

16

Jesus and his eleven year old sister MARY SHUTTLESWORTH both sit at the dinner table. The food has been cleared away, it is study time now. Jesus and Mary are both doing their homework. The apartment is sparsely furnished. We notice Jesus' many trophies, plaques, ribbons and awards.

MARY
Is LaLa coming by tonight?

JESUS
No, she is not.

MARY
Why not?

JESUS
Why don't you mind your own business? You still have homework to do.

MARY
I know what I have to do. I'm doing it. Why you get so defensive when I ask you about her.

JESUS

Nobody is getting defensive.
I just don't need to see her every
day. I see her in school and
that's enough.

MARY

Whatever.

JESUS

What did I tell you about that
whatever stuff? You think you're
grown.

MARY

You think you're my daddy.

Jesus closes his book and looks at her -- this is definitely
"THE LOOK."

MARY (contd)

I'm sorry. I apologize. I know
I'm not to talk about Daddy in
front of you.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND HOUSES - NIGHT

17

Much activity is happening in front of these projects.

INT. SYKES APARTMENT - NIGHT

18

UNCLE BUBBA, a squat, fat man is measuring his son BOOGER
with a tape measure. His wife AUNT SALLY looks on with
disapproval. He makes a mark on the wall with a pencil.

UNCLE BUBBA

Damn, Booger, you ain't grown a
bit.

BOOGER

Dad, what do you expect? You
measured me last week.

UNCLE BUBBA

When are you gonna start to grow
some? I'm tired of having a midget
for a son.

AUNT SALLY

Don't call our son a midget.
Booger isn't a midget. He's just a
late bloomer.

UNCLE BUBBA

Late bloomer, my ass. Listen,
woman, I'm sick and tired of you
(MORE)

UNCLE BUBBA (contd)
making excuses for the boy. You
make excuses for his grades in
school, his lack of game, his lack
of height, his lack of desire. No
wonder you're not being recruited
by a Division one school.

AUNT SALLY
Be quiet, you're gonna give him a
complex.

UNCLE BUBBA
Don't tell me to be quiet in my own
house. It may be in the projects
but it's still mine.

BOOGER
Daddy, you blame me for everything.
Some things I have no control over.

UNCLE BUBBA
Who told you that? A man controls
his own destiny, his own fate. You
gotta grab that motherfucker by the
throat.

BOOGER
Well, I couldn't help that you and
Mommy are small. You ever heard of
DNA, or genetics?

UNCLE BUBBA
Don't try getting scientific on me.
I know sometin' about that, I know
about diet.

AUNT SALLY
Please be quiet.

UNCLE BUBBA
Hell, no. If you would have eaten
your vegetables like me and your
mother told you to do since you
were a baby you might be six feet
instead of the midget that you are
now.

BOOGER
I'm not a midget.

AUNT SALLY
He will grow. And if he doesn't,
so be it.

UNCLE BUBBA

Spinach, carrots, collards, black eye peas, green beans, broccoli and cauliflower. All that good stuff that your mother cooked for you. We tried and tried to make you eat your vegetables.

BOOGER

I don't like 'em. They make me throw up.

AUNT SALLY

Bubba, you're about as simple as a one car funeral.

He ignores her and continues.

UNCLE BUBBA

All you wanted to eat was french fries and dessert. No wonder you're a runt.

BOOGER

What about Mugsy Bogues? He's 5 feet, three inches. I'm bigger than him, and he's in the NBA.

UNCLE BUBBA

A freak of nature. I betcha this. I betcha Jesus ate his cauliflower. Your cousin Jesus ate his vegetables. Your cousin Jesus is the numero uno prospecto en los Estados Unidos.

AUNT SALLY

Since when did you start speaking Spanish?

BOOGER

I knew this was coming.

AUNT SALLY

Bubba, let's leave Jesus out of this.

UNCLE BUBBA

Jesus can't be left out of anything.

EXT. JESUS' BUILDING - NIGHT

19

Jesus comes running out and gets his cousin Booger in a headlock.

JESUS

What did I tell you about yelling
my name, especially out in front of
my window?

BOOGER

You told me not to do it. But
since the buzzers in your building
are all broken what do you want me
to do? The elevator is broke too.

JESUS

Forget it. Let's go to the Garden.

EXT. THE GARDEN - NIGHT

20

The Garden, this basketball court has lights. Jesus and
Booger enter the playground, a serious full court game is
going on. Everyone greets them.

ANGLE - BENCH

JESUS

Who got next? Who got next? Me
and my cousin Booger got next.

They are joined by MANCE, SIP and LONNIE. All three start
with Jesus and Booger on the Abraham Lincoln High School
Varsity basketball team.

SIP

Whaddup? Whaddup?

LONNIE

Booger, Booooger.

BOOGER

Why you gotta play?

MANCE

Booooooooooger. My man.

BOOGER

You guys play too much.

JESUS

Leave him alone. He gets enough of
that shit at home.

SIP

How is Uncle Bubba by the way?

LONNIE

Oh snap. Why you gotta talk about
his peeps?

SIP

Naw, he's cool. He knows the game,
bet he taught Coach Dean Smith.

BOOGER

You got jokes. All y'all play too
much.

ANGLE - COURT

A guy is going up for a layup and somebody comes from
nowhere to pin his shot against the backboard. He got
stuck, and it was nasty.

ANGLE - BENCH

Jesus, Booger, Mance, Sip and Lonnie run in all directions,
laughing, yelling, high fiving. Besides getting dunked on,
nothing is worse as getting your shit pinned. It's
embarrassing as hell and folks won't let you forget it
either. I'm saying forever. It can be 10 years later,
"what about that time JuJu stuck your shit to the backboard"
people will start laughing all over again.

ANGLE - COURT

Jesus has his boys running the court. Booger is at the
guard, Jesus at the shooting guard position, Mance and Sip
at the forwards and Sip in the middle at center.

The opposition is no match. Jesus and his disciples as the
Lincoln Squad are called are toying with these guys and
enjoying it. Dunks, driving, twisting layups, long range
bombs, and a frenzied pressure D.

ANGLE - PLAYGROUND

A crowd has gathered to watch this truly gifted bunch of
young men play as a team.

ANGLE - COURT

Booger does a one bounce alley oop that Jesus throws down
into the cylinder with his left hand.

ANGLE - CROWD

Everyone runs onto the court, play is stopped. People
cannot believe what they just witnessed.

CLOSE - JESUS

JESUS

Who's holding me? Who's holding
me? Casper the friendly ghost?
Don't you read the papers, we're
City Champs.

CLOSE - BOOGER

BOOGER
The Abraham Lincoln Rail-splinters.

Booger takes out a folded back page Daily News from his wallet to show to everybody.

BOOGER (contd)
You didn't buy the paper that day,
son?

CLOSE - PHOTO

CUT TO:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DAY

21

The newspaper photo comes to life.

The Abraham Lincoln Railsplinters have just won the PSAL (Public School Athletic League) Championship. The starting five -- Jesus, Booger, Sip, Lonnie and Mance all have their arms around each other. Next to Jesus is COACH CINCOTTA. The remaining players on the squad are behind them. Everyone has great smiles on their faces as they pose for TV and photographers.

CLOSE - JESUS

He yells out as he holds up both hands with the number one sign. The net that has been cut down he wears proudly around his neck.

CUT TO:

ANGLE - JESUS

He is signing autographs now.

JESUS
How you gonna beat us?

EXT. OCEANSIDE MOTEL - NIGHT

22

The State vehicle pulls up in front of the Oceanside Motel. This establishment has seen better days, which were many, many years ago. Back in the day, in the glorious past of Coney Island when it was a classy joint. Today it's run down, frequented by drug addicts and prostitutes. A flophouse.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

23

The door opens and Spivey and Crudup lead Jake into the small, small room.

JAKE

Damn.

He walks around and is not overjoyed.

JAKE (contd)

Where are you guys staying?

CRUDUP

The Marriott in midtown Manhattan.

JAKE

How come I can't stay there also?

SPIVEY

Mr. Shuttlesworth, this is the only place that is reasonably close in Coney Island. Why waste all that valuable time commuting back and forth when you can walk to see your son from here.

CRUDUP

You also don't have a choice. I figure it's a lot better than your regular room in the hoosegow.

JAKE

You got a point there.

SPIVEY

This is the Plaza to you.

JAKE

I'm not complaining at all.

SPIVEY

Sit down.

JAKE

For what?

SPIVEY

Sit down.

Jake does as he is told.

SPIVEY (contd)

Let's go over a couple of things. Number one, this isn't a vacation. You are not a free man. In the eyes of the law you are still a convicted felon.

CRUDUP

Your ass is ours. Do you understand that? Do you?

JAKE

Yes, I do.

SPIVEY

Well, answer then, when we talk to you. The sooner you do what you gotta do the better it will be for all concerned parties. Here is the letter of intent for your son to sign.

Jake takes it.

SPIVEY (contd)

Take this also. In it is some money, let you buy some clothes, toothpaste, deodorant, personal effects, whatnot.

CRUDUP

Stick your left leg out.

Crudup gets on one knee and clamps on an electronic ankle bracelet on Jake. This piece of jewelry will enable them to track his whereabouts.

CRUDUP (contd)

Just in case you get any funny ideas. We will track you down.

SPIVEY

And when me and my partner find you, we will kill you dead.

CRUDUP

You have to check in with us daily. Plus when we page you, you better return our call within ten minutes or there's gonna be hell to pay.

Crudup hands Jake a beeper.

JAKE

Will you be following me?

SPIVEY

Close enough. Anything else?

JAKE

How long do I have exactly?

Crudup and Spivey both look at their watches at the same time.

SPIVEY/CRUDUP
Till midnight Sunday.

JAKE
Then I better get working.

SPIVEY
That would be the smart thing to
do. We will see you tomorrow.

CRUDUP
How's the stomach?

JAKE
Still a little bit queasy.

Crudup leaves another bottle of Mylanta on the table as they
exit.

ANGLE - ROOM

Jake sits alone in his cramped funky motel room. Funky as
it might be, a smile comes to his face. He is out from
behind bars. He is out from behind prison walls. Jake
crosses his left leg over his right so he can inspect his
electronic ankle bracelet. He takes both hands and tries to
pull it apart. No such luck, that bad boy ain't coming off.

Jake looks at the pager before turning out the lights, then
collapses onto the bed. This no doubt will be his first
good night of sleep in years. He talks to himself.

JAKE
I'm free. Thank you, Jesus.

EXT. O'DWYER GARDENS - NIGHT

24

The starting five for Lincoln sits on a bench in front of
Jesus' building, each is drinking a large bottle of
Gatorade.

SIP
So Booger, where is Jesus going?

BOOGER
How in the hell do I know? Ask the
man, he's right here, Jesus don't
tell me nuthin'.

LONNIE
He's your peeps, family.

BOOGER
Ask the man.

SIP

Yo Jesus, you decided on a school yet?

JESUS

Not yet.

MANCE

You better make up your mind quick.

SIP

Do you have like a Top 10 list?

LONNIE

Even that?

JESUS

I don't know yet.

BOOGER

You heard what the man said. When he's ready to tell the world, then he'll tell the world. Until then, no further questions for my client.

MANCE

So you his agent now and shit?

BOOGER

10 percent for the contract. 35 percent for any sneaker, or marketing deals.

SIP

That's right, Jesus. Get yours.

LONNIE

Everybody else is making loot.

SIP

Get all you can get while the getting is good. From the guttermost to the uppermost, that should be your motto.

MANCE

Take all you can take while the taking is good.

JESUS

I'm gonna look out.

SIP

Got to. I'm about the redistribution of wealth. The schools are making mad loot. You
(MORE)

SIP (contd)

see that CBS TV contract that the NC-two-A signed? Two hundred twelve million dollars!!! The coaches sign with NIKE, ADIDDAS, REEBOK or CONVERSE. They're making MAD LOOT. The schools sell tickets, sell t-shirts, basketball cards with your face and name on it, and you won't see a red cent.

BOOGER

Not a wooden nickel.

MANCE

But you do get an education. You know how much tuition is now? Some schools over thirty thou. Where you gonna get that kind of money?

SIP

So what? How much are they making off athletes like Jesus? Let me say it again, it's about the redistribution of wealth.

LONNIE

No doubt. No doubt.

SIP

You handle your business, Jesus, the way you see fit. But when I graduate next year I'm taking my services straight to the highest bidder. Whoever pays me the most I will play for them, play hard but I ain't busting my black ass for some chump change. My shit will be off the hook.

JESUS

I hear you. Just make sure you raise the level of your game after I leave this mug. Cuz' you know I make all you dawgs look better.

SIP

You trying to front?

BOOGER

That's always the sign of a great, great player. Does he make his teammates better players.

SIP

Aw shut up, Booger.

LONNIE

If that's the case, your cousin is really hooking you up lovely.

Everyone laughs except Booger.

BOOGER

What are you trying to say?

LONNIE

I'm saying you have the weakest game amongst us.

SIP

Everybody here is goin' pro except you, Booger.

SIP/LONNIE

Damn.

BOOGER

Anyway. As I was saying, in that regard Jesus is a lot like Black Jesus ...

MANCE

Who?

BOOGER

Jordan. Money. Michael Jordan. Black Jesus.

JESUS

You never heard that? Where you been?

BOOGER

Jordan makes his teammates better. Take Money off the Bulls -- Pippen, Harper, Kukoc, Kerr, Longley, they wouldn't be shit.

MANCE

Garbage.

SIP

Word. Fuck da Bulls.

BOOGER

Jesus does the same thing.

LONNIE

You just proved my point.

BOOGER

What point? You ain't got no point.

JESUS
I'm not fucking with y'all anymore.
Good night.

MANCE
Later.

Jesus gives everyone dap before he goes inside.

EXT. MERMAID AVENUE - MORNING

25

Jesus is walking his sister to school. Mary gets annoyed when he stops to sign autographs.

MARY
Will you please leave him alone.
We're late.

Jesus looks at her like she's crazy. He quietly signs the last one and catches up with her.

MARY (contd)
I know it's a hard thing to do, to
break away from your adoring
public.

EXT. P.S. 288 - MORNING

26

Public School 288 is one of the three elementary schools in Coney Island, grades kindergarten through 6th grade. Jesus kisses his sister on the cheek as they stand in front of her school entrance.

JESUS
Jesus loves you.

MARY
Will you stop saying that?

They both are laughing.

JESUS
I'll be a little late coming home.

MARY
Don't rush on my account. I'm a big girl. I can take care of myself.

JESUS
That's what I'm worried 'bout.

Mary waves him off then goes into the school entrance. As soon as she is out of sight, Jesus begins to run.

EXT. NEPTUNE AVENUE - MORNING

27

Jesus is flying.

CLOSE - JESUS

WE TRACK with him as he sprints down the block. He passes several teenage Black and Puerto Rican girls pushing their babies in strollers.

EXT. GRAVESEND HOUSES - MORNING

28

Jesus is hauling ass, then all of a sudden he slows down. He has seen something, seen somebody.

JESUS' POV

WE SEE LALA THREADGILL, 17 years old but looks like she's 25, a junior in high school. LaLa is a knockout, gorgeous, drop-dead beautiful. She is standing in front of her project building waiting for someone, holding her school books with both hands at her waist. WE NOTICE her banana yellow painted long, long fingernails.

ANGLE - LALA

Jesus tries to regroup himself as he approaches his main squeeze, his honey dip, his cutie pie, his shorty, his cheese danish -- his LaLa.

LALA

I saw you running. Don't try to play it off. If you would have been on time there would have been no need to run. If the bus would have come sooner I would have been on it.

JESUS

The B-36 bus doesn't come until I get here, LaLa. I got it like that.

He tries to kiss LaLa on the lips and she playfully turns her cheek to him.

JESUS (contd)

Why you try and fade me?

LALA

You faded yourself. You played yourself.

The B-36 bus pulls up as on cue. They get on the bus to go to school.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Jesus and LaLa walk hand in hand.

JESUS
I'll be so happy when this
recruiting stuff is over.

LALA
I know you will. Have you narrowed
down your choices yet?

JESUS
Not yet.

LALA
You gonna let me in on your secret?

JESUS
Honey dip, you know I don't keep
anything from you.

LALA
There's this guy I know that I want
you to meet.

JESUS
Who's the guy and how do you know
him?

LALA
He's a friend of the family. His
name is D'Andre Mackey.

JESUS
And what does he do?

LALA
D'Andre is an agent.

JESUS
LaLa, now you know I can't be
talkin' to no agent. That shit is
illegal.

LALA
All he wants to do is talk to you
for five minutes, see where your
head is at.

JESUS
My head is on my shoulders, and
it's gonna stay there. I'm not
messin' wit' no agents.

LALA

Please. Sweet Jesus. Please.
He's a friend of the family. Five
minutes of your time before you
make your decision.

JESUS

I don't know. Let me think about
it. I'll see you fourth period.

LaLa throws her arms around her man and tongues him down in
full view of all the students going into the building. Lala
doesn't care, and Jesus isn't fighting it. He's willing
also.

INT. COACH CINCOTTA'S OFFICE - MORNING

30

Jesus sits before COACH CINCOTTA. Coach is fiftyish,
greying and he's put on a few pounds since he played for
Lincoln back in the day. The office has framed team photos
of every Lincoln hoop squad since the school opened.
Lincoln historically is a PSAL basketball power, the
evidence is in this room, with many trophies and banners
that decorate the otherwise drab space.

COACH CINCOTTA

So how you feeling?

JESUS

OK, I guess.

COACH

Whattayoumean, OK? This should be
the most exciting time in your life
so far.

JESUS

Coach, I know that, but I just feel
OK. I'll be so happy when all this
stuff is over.

COACH CINCOTTA

Well, you don't have long.
10 AM Monday morning, press
conference. Have you made your
decision yet?

JESUS

Not yet, Coach. And that's the
thing. I don't mind you asking.
You're my coach. You're largely
responsible for me being in this
position.

COACH CINCOTTA

Well, thank you for the compliment, but you're the one with the God given ability. A ball player with your gifts comes down the pike once every twenty or so years.

JESUS

That may be, but still I'm tired of being asked "where am I going? Where am I going? Have you made a decision yet?"

COACH CINCOTTA

You should take it as a compliment. People care about you.

JESUS

Coach, do they really, really care or are they just trying to get over on me? Take advantage of me?

COACH CINCOTTA

Not all people are snakes. Some are, not all. When are you going to make your decision?

JESUS

Sometime between now and Monday morning 10 AM.

COACH CINCOTTA

You have my home phone number. Call me anytime, doesn't matter how late it is if you want to talk things through. You know with your father not being around, I've tried to fill in that spot on those special occasions when I thought it was appropriate. And I feel this is one. Jesus, I do think of you as son.

JESUS

I know, Coach.

COACH CINCOTTA

Before you run off to class, please remember what I told you. Do you remember?

JESUS

Coach, I remember.

COACH CINCOTTA

What did I say?

JESUS

This will be the most important
decision in my life.

COACH CINCOTTA

I'm going to say it one more time.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - BOBBY KNIGHT - Head Basketball Coach at Indiana
University

COACH BOBBY KNIGHT

This will be the most important
decision in your life.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JOHN THOMPSON - Head Basketball Coach at Georgetown
University

COACH JOHN THOMPSON

This will be the most important
decision in your life.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - RICK PITINO - Head Basketball Coach at University of
Kentucky

COACH RICK PITINO

This will be the most important
decision in your life.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - COACH ROY WILLIAMS - Head Basketball Coach at
University of Kansas

COACH ROY WILLIAMS

This will be the most important
decision in your life.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - DEAN SMITH - Head Basketball Coach at University of
North Carolina, Chapel Hill

COACH DEAN SMITH

This will be the most important
decision in your life.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JOHN CHANEY - Head Basketball Coach at Temple University

COACH JOHN CHANEY
This will be the most important
decision in your life.

CUT TO:

JESUS
Coach, I understand the magnitude
of my decision.

COACH CINCOTTA
Son, I know you do.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

31

Jake struggles with his key, trying to lock the door as a couple comes down the hallway towards him. The tall black man, SWEETNESS, is all over the lady, DAKOTA. She wears heels, fish net stockings and a lace top. She wears it well. Jake looks at them hard, he is staring. She is a semi-attractive, hard looking, mid-twenties white woman.

SWEETNESS
You know me and my lady?

JAKE
I don't think so.

SWEETNESS
Well, you lookin' at us with some
familiarity. Like you know us.
Mind ya' damn business.

JAKE
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be
rude.

For a quick moment Jake and the lady's eyes make contact, if only for a fleeting moment.

ANGLE - DOOR

Dakota takes out her keys and they go in. Her room is next door to Jake.

CLOSE - JAKE

Even though Dakota appears to be a working girl, she nonetheless has made an impression on him.

EXT. P.S. 288 - DAY

It's three o'clock. School is out. Hundreds of kids, hundreds of loud kids, laughing, yelling, leave school.

ANGLE - MARY

Mary is with a group of her girlfriends. They each say goodbye and she crosses the street.

ANGLE - JAKE

Jake is watching Mary and he follows behind her. He is carrying a shopping bag.

ANGLE - STREET

Jake walking behind his daughter begins to close in behind her.

JAKE
Miss Shuttlesworth.

Mary turns around and she can't believe her eyes. She freezes up, drops her books then runs into her father's waiting arms.

TWO SHOT - MARY AND JAKE

They hug each other for dear life.

MARY
Daddy! Daddy!

JAKE
I missed my little woman so much.

He kisses her on the cheeks.

JAKE (contd)
Let me look at you. My my, how you have grown. I got a young woman.

MARY
That's what I keep trying to tell Jesus.

JAKE
How is your brother?

MARY
Bossy as usual.

JAKE
He's just doing what an older brother is suppose to be
(MORE)

JAKE (contd)
doing, looking out for his baby
sister.

MARY
I still call it bossy. Daddy, when
did you get out?

JAKE
Last night. Hold Daddy's hand.
Let me walk you home to Uncle
Bubba's and Aunt Sally's.

ANGLE - STREET

Mary grabs her daddy's hand as they begin to walk.

MARY
We don't live there anymore. Jesus
moved us out.

JAKE
To where?

MARY
O'Dwyer Gardens. You know how
Uncle Bubba is.

EXT. O'DWYER GARDENS - DAY

33

Father and daughter have arrived in front of her building.
People are staring at Jake, not knowing for sure if that is
really him -- Jake Shuttlesworth.

MARY
So this is our building.

JAKE
You're not going to invite your own
father up?

MARY
I don't know if I should.
I could get in trouble.

JAKE
Trouble with who? I'm your daddy.

MARY
You know who?

JAKE
I'll leave then before he comes
home.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - DAY

34

Jake is walking around, observing the many trophies and plaques of his firstborn -- Jesus.

Mary is going through her father's shopping bag.

MARY

Toothbrush, toothpaste, razors,
shaving cream, comb, underwear, you
been shopping?

JAKE

Had to get some things.

MARY

Daddy, how did you get out? I
thought you would be away for a
long, long time.

JAKE

Can Daddy's little sugar pie Boo
keep a secret?

MARY

Yes.

JAKE

Your father is out on what is
called a work-release program. I'm
out for a week to do a job. If I'm
successful, if I do the job then it
will be good.

MARY

Meaning?

JAKE

That Daddy will get out sooner than
expected.

MARY

What's the job? What kind of job?
What do you have to do?

JAKE

I can't tell you, Boo. Not yet
anyway.

MARY

Because I'm too young. I'll be
glad when I'm eighteen. I'm tired
of being told I'm not old enough.
Can't do this, too young. Can't do
that, too young.

JAKE

Mary, that's not it. You're a young woman. It's just that Daddy would be getting into a lot of trouble.

MARY

OK, then I don't want you getting into any more trouble ... It wasn't your fault. I know you didn't mean it.

JAKE

Boo, thank you. That means a lot to your daddy.

He holds up a huge trophy of Jesus'.

JAKE (contd)

Your brother really turned into a good player.

MARY

Daddy, he's better than good. You should see him play now. He's a zillion times better than when you last saw him play. I betcha he can finally beat you.

JAKE

He probably can.

Jake and Mary turn instantly to the door, WE HEAR keys turning locks.

ANGLE - DOOR

Jesus is entering the apartment.

JESUS (OS)

Mary, you home?

She's not saying shit.

JESUS (OS, contd)

Mary.

CLOSE - JAKE

JAKE

We're in the kitchen.

ANGLE - KITCHEN

Jesus goes into the kitchen. Mary who can't look is staring down at her hands. She knows she is in trouble.

CLOSE - JESUS

He looks at his father.

CLOSE - JAKE

He looks at his son.

CLOSE - JESUS

His look is not one of love, it is much, much closer to hate.

ANGLE - KITCHEN

JAKE

Hello, son.

JESUS

What are you doing here? How did you get out?

JAKE

I can answer all your questions, but can't I get a warm hello, a hug, a kiss first?

Jake moves towards his son and embraces him. Jesus isn't feeling it at all. He doesn't respond, just stands there. The father, seeing this, steps back, slightly embarrassed.

JESUS

Mary, what did I tell you about letting strangers in our house?

MARY

He's not a stranger. He's my daddy. He's your daddy also.

JESUS

I don't have a father.

JAKE

Jesus, don't say that.

MARY

Daddy, he's tripping.

JESUS

We'll see who's tripping later on tonight. What did I tell you about talkin' to strangers?

MARY

Don't do it.

JESUS

What did I tell you about letting
strangers in our house?

MARY

Don't do it.

JESUS

And why?

MARY

Because they may do us harm.

JESUS

Good, so if you know all this,
you're a smart young lady, why did
you let this stranger in the house?

She is all jammed up. Her loyalties are all mixed up. Mary
is torn.

JESUS

Mary, you hear me talkin' to you.
Don't play deaf.

JAKE

Why are you doing this to your
sister?

JESUS

Am I talkin' to you? Mary, answer
Jesus.

MARY

I won't do it again. I promise.

JESUS

That's the intelligent sister I
know.

He turns to his father.

JESUS (contd)

It's time for you to go. I would
appreciate it if you don't ever
come back here.

JAKE

I need to talk to you.

JESUS

That might be good and fine, but I
don't want you around Mary and I
definitely don't want you up here
with us.

JAKE
When can we talk?

JESUS
You'll see me around.

JAKE
Where? It's kind of urgent.

JESUS
I'm usually at the Garden, playing ball.

JAKE
Good, I'll see you there. Bye bye, Boo.

Jake leaves. As soon as the door is shut Mary starts to run 'cause Jesus is chasing her. She's dodging him back and forth.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONEY ISLAND HOUSES - DAY

35

Jesus is knocking hard on the door. He holds his sister with his other hand.

INT. UNCLE BUBBA'S APARTMENT - DAY

36

Booger goes to the door.

BOOGER
Who's trying to break the door down?

He opens the door and Jesus shoots by him dragging Mary.

Uncle Bubba and Aunt Sally sit in the living room. He's listening to some old blues records (he's a huge fan) and his wife is watching television with the sound down.

UNCLE BUBBA
Hey. How y'all doin'?

JESUS
Not good.

AUNT SALLY
What's wrong, dear?

JESUS
Guess who showed up at our apartment?

UNCLE BUBBA
Who?

MARY

Daddy.

AUNT SALLY

Lawd have mercy.

UNCLE BUBBA

Booger, take your cousin into your room.

MARY

Why do I always have to leave?

AUNT SALLY

This is grown folks talk.

MARY

Man, I'll be glad when I'm grown also.

BOOGER

C'mon, Mary. You can play with my Sony Play Station.

That changes her vibe completely.

MARY

Good. I beat you all the time.

Booger follows his cousin into his room.

UNCLE BUBBA

When did all this happen?

JESUS

Half an hour ago.

AUNT SALLY

What did he say? What does he want?

JESUS

Says he wants to speak to me. Says it's urgent.

AUNT SALLY

It just don't make no sense.

UNCLE BUBBA

It makes perfect sense. He smells the money.

AUNT SALLY

What I would like to know, how does a convicted murderer get out so quick? How can this be? He's not even eligible for parole yet.

Aunt Sally is becoming visibly upset.

JESUS

He told Mary he's out on some kind of work-release program.

UNCLE BUBBA

The man escaped from prison just like that Clint Eastwood flick, "Escape From Alcatraz."

JESUS

He wasn't acting like he was a fugitive.

AUNT SALLY

We should call the cops.

UNCLE BUBBA

We're gonna do no such thing. The smart thing to do is for you to go meet your father.

JESUS

He's not my father.

UNCLE BUBBA

I know how you feel, but the fact remains he is your father, Mary's also. But as your legal guardians as appointed by the Court in the State of New York, you should involve us more in your life; Mary's too.

AUNT SALLY

Jesus, we're family. Your mother Martha, my sister, my only sibling, I loved her. We feel responsible for the both of you. I made a promise to your mother that if anything ever happened to her, we would be there for the both of you.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOGER'S ROOM - DAY

37

Mary as she predicted is beating her cousin Booger as they play on his Sony Play Station.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

38

UNCLE BUBBA

As I said before, you should meet your father. See what he has to say.

JESUS

I told him I'd be over at the Garden.

UNCLE BUBBA

Before you go see your father, what you need to do is use some of my "John the Conqueror Root." That will fix him up real good.

AUNT SALLY

Bubba, nobody ain't studying you and your roots.

UNCLE BUBBA

Be quiet, woman. "John the Conqueror Root" never fails.

JESUS

No, thanks, Uncle Bubba.

UNCLE BUBBA

Suit yourself. You make a decision yet?

JESUS

Not yet.

UNCLE BUBBA

Your Aunt Sally feels bad we aren't being included in this important decision.

AUNT SALLY

Jesus, he's not speaking for me. You do what you want, what you feel is right for you.

UNCLE BUBBA

Can you A-B-C your way out of our conversation, please? Son, what are they offering you? What are they going to give you?

JESUS

Full scholarship.

UNCLE BUBBA

Full scholarship. That's all? No money. No cars. No jobs for relatives.

JESUS

No school has said anything like that.

UNCLE BUBBA

I don't believe that. I think you're holding out. Trying to keep your Aunt Sally and Uncle Bubba out of the deal.

JESUS

What deal?

UNCLE BUBBA

The deal that's about to go down, I hear things.

JESUS

You didn't hear that.

UNCLE BUBBA

All I'm asking is that you consider us, think of your Aunt Sally and Uncle Bubba. I just feel it's only right that we both be compensated for sacrifices we had to make when we took you and your sister in.

Aunt Sally stands up upon hearing this.

AUNT SALLY

I'm going into the kitchen. I want no part of this.

UNCLE BUBBA

Good, take your fat ass into the kitchen then.

She leaves.

JESUS

I thought you said we're family.

UNCLE BUBBA

We are family. Blood. Thick as thieves. But we put out a lot of money taking you and your sister in. All I'm asking is that you let me wet my beak a little bit.

JESUS

Wet your beak?

UNCLE BUBBA

Wet my beak. You didn't see "The Godfather II"? The guy was called the Black Hand. Anyway, you owe me. You owe your Aunt Sally. We put out financially for you and your sister. You lived here for 3½ years before you moved out. We fed you, clothed you, we housed you. Gave you spending money. I don't feel what I'm asking for is unreasonable. We're family.

JESUS

Yeah, family.

UNCLE BUBBA

You know families have to stick together. I suspect you got a deal already in place.

JESUS

What kinda deal?

UNCLE BUBBA

The kinda deal that enables you to move out of here into an apartment, pay rent, pay Ma Bell, pay Con Ed, buy furniture, have money for clothes and food and still have no visible source of income. You don't have a job. So, Jesus, don't play me for a fool. I've been around the block a couple of times.

Jesus has nothing really to say.

UNCLE BUBBA

Am I making any sense?

JESUS

A lot of sense. I won't forget you or Aunt Sally. When I do get really paid, you'll get paid.

UNCLE BUBBA

I'm not too old to have dreams also. I still got dreams, big plans. I'm not done yet. I don't want to always live here in these projects in goddamn Coney Island. Why shouldn't me and your Aunt be cut in? We invested time and money in you.

JESUS
Anything else you want, Uncle
Bubba?

UNCLE BUBBA
You still need some of my "John the
Conqueror Root" for when you meet
your daddy. The roots work.

JESUS
No, thanks.

UNCLE BUBBA
One day you'll ask me for it.

INT. FOOTLOCKER - DAY

39

Jake is looking at the hundreds of sneakers on the display
shelf.

The clerk kneels before him with the sneaker boxes. The
clerk takes out the first pair.

CLERK
These are the new Jordans.

He has the left sneaker in his hand and tries to put it on
Jake's left foot. His left foot is the one with the
electronic tracking device. For a moment Jake had forgotten
all about it.

CLERK (contd)
Here we go.

The clerk sees the ankle bracelet, Jake quickly sticks out
his right foot instead, pulling back his left.

JAKE
It's for the arthritis in my ankle.

CLERK
My brother has the same arthritic
condition too, but it's his right
ankle. It's going around here in
Coney Island.

They both laugh.

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

40

Jake is at the foul line, shooting, when Jesus and Booger
walk in.

BOOGER
Hello, Mr. Shuttlesworth.

JAKE
Since when did you start calling
your Uncle Mister?

BOOGER
Hello, Uncle Jake.

JAKE
That's more like it. How have you
been?

BOOGER
OK.

JAKE
Your game?

BOOGER
OK.

JAKE
Your schoolwork?

BOOGER
OK.

JAKE
You do look like you've grown some.

BOOGER
You think so?

JAKE
Looks like an inch or two to me.

BOOGER
That's the best thing I heard in
weeks. I'm gonna let you two talk,
get reacquainted. I'm ghost.

JAKE
I'll see you around.

Booger leaves happily.

JESUS
So you got some new Jordans.

Jake fires the ball to his son.

JAKE
Let's go. One on one. Me and you.
You still can't beat your Pops..

Jesus returns the ball just as hard to his father.

JESUS

No, thanks. No comp.

JAKE

What are you, scared? Maybe one day then.

JESUS

Maybe.

JAKE

I think about your mother all the time. I use to ask her where she's going? Your mother would tell me where she'd been. She was funny like that. Boy, she sure could make me laugh.

JESUS

That is definitely the wrong way to try and start a conversation with me.

JAKE

Jesus. Forgive and move on.

JESUS

I'm not capable of doing that.

JAKE

One letter, one visit from you and Mary would have meant the world to me. You have no idea what it means to be locked up. Did you ever get any of my letters?

JESUS

I got 'em. Tore 'em up.

JAKE

What about the letters I sent to Mary?

JESUS

Tore 'em up too.

JAKE

Tore 'em up?

JESUS

Tore 'em up too.

JAKE

Since you're too afraid to play me, can we sit down?

Jesus walks towards a bench as Jake follows.

JESUS

What did you want to talk about anyway?

JAKE

I've been away. I want to catch up. A lot of things.

JESUS

Well, I don't have a lot of time.

JAKE

Then I better talk fast. I've been reading about you. Your game has really developed. All that hard work has paid off. I'm proud of you. I know this must be a tough time for you now. I was thinking you might need some fatherly advice.

JESUS

From who? About what?

JAKE

From me, of course, number one. Number two, where you wish to attend school. Have you made a decision yet?

JESUS

Jesus Christ. You too! Don't tell, don't tell me. I know already what you're gonna say, "this will be the most important decision in your life."

JAKE

That wasn't it all. I just wanted to ask you, that I hope you don't compromise yourself. A lot of people have been offering you a lot of things. I just don't want you to be in a position where you're beholden to somebody because you took something. That's all.

JESUS

Hell, yeah, I took some money. I got a little sister to raise, and I refuse to let her grow up in the same apartment with Uncle Bubba and Aunt Sally. That's why we moved out. What am I suppose to do? You're not here. I'm responsible for Mary. Not you, Bubba or Aunt Sally, nobody else but me.

JAKE

I understand that but please cover your tracks. That's all I'm asking. Be careful.

JESUS

Is that it?

JAKE

I would like to know where you're going?

JESUS

What difference does it make what school I go to?

JAKE

I would like to know.

JESUS

I haven't made up my mind yet.

JAKE

Do you have an idea?

JESUS

Like I've told everybody else in the world, I DON'T KNOW YET. I DON'T KNOW YET.

JAKE

I pray that you will finally understand why I drove you so hard. It was to get you, Jesus Shuttlesworth, to the next level. I had to push you, prod you, stay on your behind. You use to be lazy. Talent isn't always enough. It takes a lot of heart also.

Jesus stands up.

JESUS

Why in the hell did you ever decide to name me Jesus? What kind of name is that?

JAKE

Biblical.

JESUS

No kidding. Why would you and Mommy choose a name like that?

JAKE

It wasn't your mother's idea.

JESUS

I figured that. She had sense.

JAKE

You don't like your name? You never told me that.

JESUS

I told Mommy. I told Mommy a lot of things.

JAKE

You don't think you can talk to your father?

JESUS

You haven't been around lately ... I use to hate for her to call me to come in for dinner. Jesus! Jesus! People thought she was a religious freak ...

CUT TO:

EXT. WINDOW - DUSK

41

MARTHA SHUTTLESWORTH, in her early 30's, leans out of their apartment window.

JESUS (VO, contd)

... catching the Holy Ghost.

CLOSE - MARTHA

MARTHA

Jesus! Jesus! Time to come in and eat. And bring your sister Mary with you.

EXT. O'DWYER GARDENS - DUSK

42

A 10 year old Jesus walks down the sidewalk to his building. Several young boys walk behind him, bowing. Some run up in front of him and get down on their knees to pray. They all chant "PRAISE THE LORD, PRAISE THE LORD."

YOUNG BOOGER

Save me, Jesus. Save me, Jesus.

YOUNG JESUS

Stop, Booger. That ain't funny.

JESUS (VO)
You should have seen my friends.
They would part in front of me like
the Red Sea.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

43

ANGLE - BENCH

JAKE
You should know your Bible. Moses
parted the Red Sea, not Jesus.

JESUS
Moses, Jesus, same thing.

JAKE
It's not the same thing. Good
Lord, I have a heathen for a son.
Don't you know the Good Book?

JESUS
No, and I don't want to learn also.
By you naming me Jesus, you turned
me against religion.

JAKE
You don't mean that.

JESUS
Hell yeah, I mean it. Don't
believe in God too.

JAKE
You just couldn't stop. Leave well
enough alone. You had to take it
there.

JESUS
I can't feel God. I can't see Him.
I can't touch Him. He/She don't
exist.

JAKE
Religion is about faith, and faith
is the substance of things hoped
for -- evidence unseen.

JESUS
Everybody and their mama running
around saying they're born again,
they're true Christians.
Especially these athletes and
entertainers. Christian phonies,
(MORE)

JESUS (contd)

Christian fakes, get caught smoking crack in a hotel with ten ho's and all of a sudden they have a religious experience. They find God at that precise moment. Yeah, right. I know what kind of experience they feel. You know what? Levitation. Millions of dollars levitating, floating out of their pockets up into the atmosphere. They found Jesus alright. All these athletes thanking God, thanking Jesus Christ, their Lord and Savior for their victories. Bullshit. Jesus ain't got a goddamn thing to do with it.

JAKE

Jesus Christ has to do with everything.

JESUS

Does that mean players or teams for that matter that lose, that don't win, don't believe in God? That they didn't pray as hard? And another thing, how come you never hear Jesus being praised, Our Lord and Savior in the losers' locker room? They're probably cursing out God.

JAKE

You've got cynical in your old age. If you don't have faith, you don't have anything.

JESUS

I got eyes and ears. Why people have to be ass out before they find religion?

JAKE

You are making a sweeping generalization. Besides, people falter, people veer off the straight and narrow, but the Lord always forgives.

JESUS

Has the Lord forgiven you for taking a life? Has the Lord forgiven you for taking the life of my mother? Has He done that yet?

JAKE

I believe He has. When will you?

JESUS

Probably never.

JAKE

I'm sorry to hear that.

JESUS

Thou shalt not kill. Isn't that from the Good Book, The Bible?

JAKE

Yes it is. Jesus, nothing I can say or do will bring your mother back.

JESUS

Not even getting down on my hands and knees praying? Not even getting up and going to church every Sunday and getting sanctified? Putting all my money in the silver platter?

JAKE

You shouldn't mock God.

JESUS

Let me ask you this. Did you love my mother?

JAKE

I loved her more than life itself.

JESUS

Wrong answer. You say you loved Mommy more than life itself, whose life are you talking about? Hers or yours?

JAKE

I blame nobody but myself. I have taken full responsibility for my actions. Didn't I plead guilty? God is making me pay.

JESUS

Damn, there you go again. Can we keep Him out of it? How did you get out of prison anyway? And when are you going back?

Jesus leaves his father on the bench.

INT. JESUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesus walks into his room. He bends down and pulls out a shoe box from underneath his bed.

CLOSE - JESUS

Jesus sits down on his bed and opens the shoe box. It is filled with unopened letters sent to him and his sister by his father. The phone rings, he answers it.

JESUS

Hello. This is he. Hello, Coach, how are you? ... Not yet. I really haven't decided ... I can say that I don't like cold, cold weather. I know your school is in Minnesota ... I guess so. Thank you for calling. Talk to you soon.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JESUS

The phone rings again.

JESUS

Yes, Coach. I understand that you've been in the Final Four the last two years ... but ... I do have some concerns ... Your university doesn't have the diversity in the student body that I'm looking for. 90% of your minority students are on the football, basket-ball and track teams, and your graduation rate is 29% ... I know you're working in the area ... I do appreciate it.

CUT TO:

CLOSER - JESUS

JESUS

Coach ... I do appreciate the fact that your university is the top religious institution in the country, but don't let the name fool you. It's a misnomer. I'm not really that religious ... Yes, I did get the "JESUS IS THE ANSWER" T-shirts ... Oh yeah, I'm wearing it now.

Jesus is fibbing. WE SEE he's wearing his Lincoln T-shirt.

MARY (OS)
Jesus, you off the phone yet?

JESUS
... I apologize, sir, but I have to go ... What's that? Oh ... Praise Jesus, Praise Jesus. Amen. Thank you. Good night.

Jesus hangs up the phone.

INT. MARY'S ROOM - NIGHT

45

She is in the bed as Jesus walks into the room.

MARY
You been on the phone all night.
Those schools calling, we should get another unlisted phone number.

JESUS
This was the third one. Every time we change it, it still gets out.

MARY
Jesus, I'll be glad when all this stuff is over.

JESUS
I know you will.

MARY
How long?

JESUS
It will be over Monday morning.

MARY
Thank you, Jesus.

JESUS
You think that's funny?

They both are laughing.

MARY
I like teasing you.

JESUS
I know you do.

MARY
Jesus, everybody says I'm gonna be rich. I won't have to worry about a thing.

Jesus sits down on the edge of her bed.

JESUS

Did your father tell you that?

MARY

No, but everybody else in the world.

JESUS

Boo, everybody don't know.

MARY

Everybody says you're going to play professional basketball, have your own sneakers, star in Nike commercials, make millions of dollars, so much money that we can move out of Coney Island.

JESUS

What did I tell you about listening to what people say?

MARY

I hear what you say, but it must be true. Everybody is saying the same thing. Even Uncle Bubba said that you were going to buy him and Aunt Sally a new house in Long Island. Even asked me if I wanted to go when he went house shopping. Looking for a big ole' house with a green lawn, grass, lotsa trees and a swimming pool in the back.

JESUS

Uncle Bubba told you that? He can't even swim.

MARY

But he's fat enough to float. I'm not lying.

She laughs.

JESUS

I'm gonna have to speak to your uncle.

MARY

He's your uncle too. Jesus, the kids in my school say since I'm going to be rich and famous, there's no use in me going to school anymore. That I'm just wasting my time, that I already know how to count.

Jesus grabs Mary. He yells.

JESUS

C'mere. If I ever hear you say anything like that again, I'll kill you myself. We're not rich. We don't have any money yet. Nothing is guaranteed. Those friends of yours at school aren't really your friends. If they were, they wouldn't be telling you some ignorant lies, getting your head all twisted around with that old mentality. You can take the nigger out of the projects but you can't take the projects out of the nigger.

MARY

Let go of me. I never said I believed it. Just that this is what people are saying.

Jesus lets go of his sister. He tries to calm himself down.

JESUS

I apologize for putting my hands on you. I'm sorry. Mommy wanted you to finish college, then go on get your graduate degree. Here you are in 6th grade talkin' 'bout dropping out.

MARY

Jesus, I'm going to Spelman College for undergrads, then to NYU Med. School.

JESUS

That's right. You're my big sister and we have no dummies in this family.

MARY

What about Uncle Bubba?

JESUS

He married into the Shuttlesworth family.

MARY

Why is Daddy here? Why did he come back?

JESUS

He won't be here much longer.

MARY

I miss him.

He kisses his sister on the forehead.

JESUS

Good night.

MARY

Good night Jesus.

Jesus gets up from the bed and turns the lights off.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

46

Jesus is on the sofa watching ESPN'S SPORTSCENTER.

CLOSE - TV

ANCHOR ROBIN ROBERTS

Tonight our feature is about a
Biblical player. The chosen one,
the second coming, the
resurrection, the salvation. ESPN
gets religion as we follow a day in
the life of Abraham Lincoln senior
Jesus Shuttlesworth. The number
one basketball prospect in the
country, JESUS of CONEY ISLAND.

CLOSE - JESUS

He is all smiles.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM

47

The small room is dark, except for the light that comes from
the small television that is chained to the wall. Jake too
is watching the feature on his son.

CLOSE - TELEVISION

WE SEE basketball greats talk about Jesus Shuttlesworth,
people like MAGIC JOHNSON, MICHAEL JORDAN, KAREEM ABDUL
JABBAR, CHARLES BARKLEY, DR. J., LARRY BIRD, BILL WALTON,
SHAQ. All sing his praises.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

48

Jesus has moved off the sofa and sits right in front of the
television.

CLOSE - TELEVISION

WE SEE big time college basketball coaches such as JOHN
THOMPSON, RICK PITINO, BOBBY KNIGHT, DEAN SMITH, LUTE OLSON,
NOLAN RICHARDSON, COACH K OF DUKE, JIM BOEHIEM talk about

how rare a talent Jesus is, that somebody with his God given talent comes down the pike rarely.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

49

Jake has moved off his bed and squats in front of the broken down television.

CLOSE - TELEVISION

WE SEE Jesus on the screen.

JESUS

I want to enjoy the remaining time
I have while still in high school.
I will always want to have fun, at
the same time I realize I've been
blessed by God or whoever with some
unusual talents and it would be
sinful if I didn't take full
advantage of them.

CLOSE - JAKE

He is watching intently.

JESUS (OS)

The school I do choose will be the
right choice. I'm certain of that.
I'm just sorry that my mother
Martha Shuttlesworth won't be here
to see me graduate from Lincoln in
June.

CLOSE - TELEVISION

JESUS (contd)

Or see me get my bachelor's degree
four years from now.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

50

He turns off the television and turns off the lights and goes to bed.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

51

Jake sits on the side of his bed with the Bible in his hands. He closes it, jumps on the floor and starts doing pushups.

JAKE

The example of Jesus; Therefore,
since we are surrounded by so great
a cloud of witnesses ...

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S PRISON CELL - NIGHT

52

Jake is doing pushups in his cell, still saying his bible verse.

JAKE (contd)
... let us also lay aside every
weight and the sin that clings so
closely, and let us run with
endurance that race is set before
us. Hebrews 12:1.

CLOSE - JAKE

He stares at the ceiling.

JAKE'S POV

The ceiling is plastered with newspaper clippings and magazine articles about the basketball exploits of his son Jesus. WE HEAR the skeetch, the squeaking of sneakers on the hardwood and also the sound of a basketball being dribbled, being pounded onto the court.

CLOSE - JAKE

He lies back on his bed.

The basketball sounds fade out and are replaced by the sound of a woman screaming.

ANGLE - CELL

Jake sits up.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

53

Jake sits up on his bed. WE HEAR the screams of the same woman, it's from the next room. A door slams, the screaming stops.

Jake gets up from his bed and moves quickly to the door.

ANGLE - DOOR

He cracks the door and peeks out.

JAKE'S POV

WE SEE the pimp Sweetness gliding down the hall.

ANGLE - HALLWAY

As Sweetness passes THE CAMERA and goes down the steps, Jake comes out from his room and goes next door and knocks.

ANGLE - DOOR

Jake knocks again. He tries the door knob and it turns.

INT. DAKOTA'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

54

Jake enters the room.

JAKE

Hello.

DAKOTA

What the hell you want?

She is slumped on the floor. We can't see her face.

JAKE

I'm staying next door and it sounded like you needed some help.

DAKOTA

Help? You weren't knocking on that door when I was getting my ass kicked.

Jake moves towards her.

JAKE

Let me help you.

He gently raises her to her feet.

Jake turns her slowly so he can see her face, it is badly swollen, it looks like she has been eating some knuckle sandwiches.

DAKOTA

Stunning, isn't it?

JAKE

You got any ice?

DAKOTA

This isn't the Trump Plaza, run the cold water in the bathroom tub.

Jake does as he is told. Dakota follows him to the bathroom to see her face.

ANGLE - MIRROR

She looks at herself. She is jacked up.

DAKOTA

At least I still got my teeth.

Jake appears from behind her and places a cold, wet wash cloth to her bruised face.

ANGLE - BATHROOM

Dakota sits on the stool with the seat down and Jake sits on the bathtub.

DAKOTA

I seen you around, noticed you right away. You don't belong here.

JAKE

How can you tell?

DAKOTA

You don't seem like the kind of guy that would be residing in a house of ill repute. My name is Dakota. Like Fargo, North Dakota. You seen that movie?

JAKE

No, I been away. I'm Jake ...

DAKOTA

Please, no last names.

JAKE

Why?

DAKOTA

In my line of work, last names aren't needed, better off without 'em.

JAKE

Why does he beat you?

DAKOTA

Because he can.

JAKE

Why do you let him beat you?

DAKOTA

You trying to get inside my head, to see how I think? Think ya slick?

JAKE

Dakota, I would like to know something about you.

DAKOTA

I'm not no crack ho! I don't do drugs.

JAKE
I wasn't accusing you of anything.

DAKOTA
Most people make that assumption.
I'm clean. Every ho ain't a crack
ho.

JAKE
Are you clean?

DAKOTA
Clean, in that sense. Drug free.

JAKE
You still didn't answer my
question.

DAKOTA
What question?

JAKE
Why you allow your pimp ...

DAKOTA
... His name is Sweetness.

JAKE
Why you allow your pimp Sweetness
to beat you?

DAKOTA
A lot of reasons, take your pick.

JAKE
I'm listening.

DAKOTA
I love him. He loves me. He says
I'm his number one money maker.
Low self-esteem. I was abused as a
child. I like it. I deserved it.
It keeps me in line. He always
says he's sorry. We're gonna get
married once he saves up enough
money so we can get out of this
racket and buy a farm in Vermont,
raise some cows, then have two
kids. One boy. One girl. Jonah
and Sarah.

CLOSE - JAKE

He looks at her and really doesn't know what to think.

CLOSE - DAKOTA

She holds the wash cloth to her face. She smiles.

DAKOTA
You don't believe that?

CLOSE - JAKE

JAKE
I don't know what to believe.

DAKOTA
You figure it out. But what about you? That's my problem, or one of my many problems. I just open up, tell people my whole life history and I just met them, and I don't even know anything about them.

JAKE
I told you my name, you didn't want my last name. I'm a father of two. One boy, one girl, just like you and Sweetness are going to have in the fairy tale you told me.

DAKOTA
Don't make fun of me.

JAKE
I'm not. Their names are Jesus and Mary.

DAKOTA
You really must be into religion.

JAKE
You could say that.

DAKOTA
My mother usta make me go to Sunday school when I was young. I liked getting all dressed up to go to church. Nothing wrong with religion, I just seen too many bad things in life. You think you're slick. We're not talking 'bout me anymore until you tell me some more things about you.

JAKE
I think I can help you.

DAKOTA
Can you write me a check for a million dollars?

JAKE
That I cannot do.

DAKOTA
Then, Mr. Jake, you can't help me.

JAKE
You should let me try.

DAKOTA
You trying to fuck me isn't going to help me. Why do you men think Dick is the cure-all?

JAKE
You need to know me better. I don't think like that.

DAKOTA
You a man, ain't you?

JAKE
Do you wish to know some things about me or not?

DAKOTA
I'm sorry. I'll shut my trap. I talk too much, that's what Sweetness always says.

Jake walks over to her and takes the wash cloth. He moves to the tub and runs some more cold water on it, then hands it back to Dakota.

DAKOTA (contd)
Thank you.

JAKE
My wife, Martha. I loved her very much. I took her life. I'm a murderer. I'm still serving time. I got a ways to go. I'm paying for my sins.

DAKOTA
Get out. I don't believe you. You killed your wife?

JAKE
It's all true. They let me out on a special work release program.

DAKOTA
So we're both fucked up.

JAKE

I would prefer you don't use
language like that around me.

DAKOTA

Well, you know what? That's how I
express myself. That's me. I
curse. I also fuck old nasty men,
suck dicks too. That's my
profession.

JAKE

Don't say that.

DAKOTA

Why not? That's the truth. I do
everything but drugs, that's where
I draw the line. So if we're to be
friends you will have to realize
this. This is who Dakota is. You
are who you are. You say you're a
murderer. OK. If you say so.
Maybe we get along, maybe we don't.

JAKE

We can help each other. Tell
Sweetness to treat you sweet.

CUT TO:

INT. JESUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

55

The phone rings. Jesus grabs it. He's still half-asleep.

JESUS

I didn't yet! What time is it
anyway? Who?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

56

CLOSE - LALA

It is LaLa on the other end.

LALA

It's me, baby. Sorry to call you
this late, but I had to speak to
you.

CUT TO:

INT. JESUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

57

CLOSE - JESUS

JESUS

LaLa, what's so important that it
couldn't wait till the morning?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 58

CLOSE - LALA

LALA

Honey, I really need you to meet
with the guy I was
telling you about. He still wants
just five minutes of your time.

JESUS (OS)

What's his name again?

LALA

D'Andre Mackey. He's a good
brother also.

JESUS (OS)

I don't know about this. I could
get in trouble.

LALA

I told you he's a friend of the
family. It would mean a lot to me.
Please.

CUT TO:

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

59

CLOSE - JESUS

JESUS

OK. Just let me go back to sleep.

LALA (OS)

I'll arrange everything.

JESUS

Seeya at school. Good night.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

60

WIDE SHOT

We are in the apartment of the agent D'ANDRE MACKEY. He stands behind LaLa as she hangs up the phone. They both are butt naked.

D'ANDRE
What did Jesus say?

LALA
He's down whenever you want to meet.

D'Andre turns Lala around and sticks his tongue in her mouth. She tongues him back then pulls out.

CLOSE - LALA

LALA
You got my shit?

CLOSE - D'ANDRE

D'ANDRE
I got it, baby.

CUT TO:

INT. D'ANDRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

61

LaLa is on top of D'Andre. He has a small white circle of powder on his chest.

CLOSE - LALA

LaLa with a rolled up hundred dollar bill snorts the cocaine off the black barreled, chiseled chest of D'Andre.

D'ANDRE
You like that. You like that.
I got plenty more

ANGLE - LALA'S BUTT

LaLa is on her stomach and her two heavenly shaped cocoa brown buttocks rise to the sky. On each buttock is a small circle of the white stuff. With his own hundred dollar bill rolled up, D'Andre snorts each buttock.

LALA
Hit me off proper.

D'Andre flips LaLa over and they start to go at it.

JAKE (OS)
I'm comin'. I'm comin'.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

62

ANGLE - DOOR

Jake opens the door and Spivey and Crudup enter.

CRUDUP
Good morning, Jake.

JAKE
What time is it?

SPIVEY
Time to get your ass out of bed.
If I was you I'd be spending very
little time sleeping.

JAKE
Well, you aren't me.

SPIVEY
That's right. I haven't killed
anybody yet.

JAKE
Why take it there?

CRUDUP
Everybody, let's be friends.

SPIVEY
Today is Wednesday morning. Time
sure is flying.

JAKE
Are you suppose to be making me
feel better? I know what day it
is.

SPIVEY
We just don't want you to lose
track of time. We're all on a
tight schedule. We could all go
back earlier if you decided to give
up, throw in the towel. You
haven't had much success with Jesus
yet.

CRUDUP
Leave the man alone. It's not over
till it's over, till the fat lady
sings.

JAKE

Since I am on the clock if you gentlemen have nothing else to do I would like to start my day.

CRUDUP

We're leaving.

SPIVEY

Just doing our job.

JAKE

Good. Let me try to do mine.

EXT. NEPTUNE AVENUE - MORNING

63

Jesus and Booger are walking to the B-36 bus stop.

BOOGER

I heard through the grapevine that you're going to bypass college and apply for the NBA draft. Pull a Kobe Bryant power move. Cous', you hurt me to the core. I shouldn't have to hear that first in the street. Especially since I represent you as your agent.

JESUS

First of all, it's illegal for me to have an agent.

BOOGER

Advisor then. Braintrust.

JESUS

Second of all, what you heard is false. Nobody has contacted me ... yet, from the NBA.

BOOGER

Yet! So you are considering it.

JESUS

Not at all. It would be illegal for an NBA team to make contact with me also.

BOOGER

Fuck illegal. Who cares when we're talkin' 'bout the amount of money that is there for the taking.

JESUS

Money ain't everything.

BOOGER

Jesus, you can play that saint stuff with somebody else. I know you've taken some fews and two's.

JESUS

Just contributions to the Jesus Shuttlesworth scholarship fund.

BOOGER

I bet the NC-two A would have a thing or two to say about that.

JESUS

They would, but I don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

BOOGER

What does that mean?

JESUS

It's just a saying.

BOOGER

I'm not stupid. I know it's a saying, but what does it mean?

JESUS

That it would be foolish for me to turn down an opportunity when it comes my way.

BOOGER

I knew that.

JESUS

You lying.

BOOGER

You and my father think I'm stupid, right?

JESUS

I can't speak for your Pops but I do think you are.

BOOGER

Why you gonna play me like that? Jesus, will you take me with you? Can't you make it a package deal?

JESUS

Booger I love you but you don't have the grades, and you still haven't passed your SAT.

BOOGER

Ok. Ok. I don't want to be around
you anymore anyway.

EXT. CORNER - MORNING

64

Jesus and Booger await the B-36 with a lot of other students
who attend Lincoln also.

Jesus is surrounded and is asked to sign autographs which he
does. Booger becomes very protective.

BOOGER

Back up. Back up. Let the man
breathe. Give him some air. Dag,
people act like you never saw Jesus
before. You want his autograph now
cuz' you know it's gonna be worth
some money, real soon.

ANGLE - STREET

A 500 SL Mercedes-Benz pulls up in front of Jesus and
Booger. The driver is BIG TIME WILLIE. He is the primo
drug dealer in Coney Island.

BIG TIME WILLIE

Jesus, you know you shouldn't be
riding the bus with these peasants.

BOOGER

Big Time Willie, that's what I've
been trying to tell him. He won't
listen.

JESUS

I like the bus, like to be amongst
peoples, my peeps.

BOOGER

Oh snap. It's your Pops.

BOOGER'S POV

WE SEE Jake crossing the street, heading towards them.

CLOSE - JESUS

He doesn't want to talk to his father, not this morning at
least.

ANGLE - MERCEDES-BENZ

JAKE

Son, can I speak to you?

JESUS
Not right now. We're late for
school. Booger, get in.

Jesus opens the door to the sedan, pulls the seat back,
Booger climbs in the rear.

JAKE
When can we talk?

JESUS
I don't know. You'll see me
around.

He gets in and Big Time Willie pulls out.

EXT. MERMAID AVENUE - MORNING

65

The Mercedes is going down the avenue.

INT. MERCEDES - MORNING

66

BIG TIME WILLIE
Do you want me to talk to your
Pops?

JESUS
No, thanks.

BIG TIME WILLIE
If he keeps stressin' you I will
handle it if you give the word.

JESUS
I can handle my own business.

BIG TIME WILLIE
Handle it then son ... You know ya
Pops bugged out as he is, he had
mad crazy skills. He could ball.
You know that, right?

Jesus is mum.

BIG TIME WILLIE (contd)
You know he was a great
ballplaayer?

BOOGER
He knows.

BIG TIME WILLIE
So let's go to A.C. Atlantic City.
My treat.

BOOGER
We got school.

BIG TIME WILLIE

Jesus?

JESUS

Like my cousin said, we got school.

BIG TIME WILLIE

My bad. My bad. I can't be
fucking with y'all's education.
You decide what school you going
to?

BOOGER

Not yet.

Big Time Willie turns around and looks at Booger with
menace.

BIG TIME WILLIE

Look, you little midget
motherfucker, I wasn't talking to
you. You wanna walk to school?
Put ya black ass out.

Jesus comes to his defense.

JESUS

Big Time, it's cool. It's cool.

BIG TIME WILLIE

Damn, ya 'bout to make me act my
color early in the morning.
I'm sorry. My bad. My bad.
Jesus, did you ever once think
about why nobody fucks with you?
Have you?

JESUS

No.

BIG TIME WILLIE

Maybe you should start. It's no
coincidence that brothers don't be
getting in beefs with you, trying
to start shit. You know how
jealous niggers can be when they
see somebody 'bout to blow up.
These young brothers are killing
each other mad crazy. The reason
why nobody fucks with you is
because Big Time Willie put the
word out. I told motherfuckers
they fuck with you, they dead. Be
floating in the Atlantic Ocean with
no life preserver, no arms or legs,
(MORE)

BIG TIME WILLIE (contd)
 to swim with either. I hate to
 break it down to you like this but
 it's not cuz' folks love you.
 You'll see one day. The more
 successful you are, the more
 mother-fuckers hate you. That's
 when you really have to watch your
 back. I know you can ball but that
 don't mean a thing to these niggers
 out here, who'd shoot you dead in a
 second just on GP, that's on the
 strength.

JESUS
 I should thank you then.

BIG TIME WILLIE
 Thank me. Don't thank me. Either
 way I really don't care. I just
 thought you should know what time
 it is.

BOOGER
 He knows.

Big Time Willie glares at Booger.

BIG TIME WILLIE
 A lot of great ballplayers come out
 of Coney Island but for various
 reasons they never made it.

JESUS
 Like what?

BIG TIME WILLIE
 At the top of the list is drugs.

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS

Crack pipes, belts being tightened around arms, mouths
 inhaling crack pipes, needles being stuck in veins. Old
 looking brothers nodding out. Crack ho's scratching.
 Needles being stuck in between toes. Heroin being cooked in
 a spoon.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - BIG TIME WILLIE

BIG TIME WILLIE
 Alcohol and malt liquor ...

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS

Young brothers on project benches guzzling 40 ounce bottles of St. Ides, Old E, and the rest of those liquid crack brands. Somebody has pulled a "gat." WE HEAR GUNSHOTS -- SCREAMS -- a flurry of arms and limbs. Blood flows down the gutter.

CUT TO:

BIG TIME WILLIE (VO)
... and pussy.

QUICK SHOTS

Huge breasts, nipples, buttocks, legs, thighs, lips, tongues, all licking, gyrating, pumping, and grinding.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - BIG TIME WILLIE

BIG TIME WILLIE (contd)
Those three are a deadly combination.
Fuck a motherfucker up quick. And
I didn't even mention the blood
sucking leeches. The new found
relatives, families, long lost
friends who smell the money.

CUT TO:

EXTREME WIDE ANGLE CLOSEUPS

Smiling faces, lips, teeth, smiling faces ???? lie.

VOICES

I love you. I love you.
I love you.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN H.S. - MORNING

66

The Mercedes pulls up in front of the school.

ANGLE - MERCEDES

BIG TIME WILLIE
School time. Jesus, be safe.

JESUS
Why do you sell drugs?

BIG TIME WILLIE
Wait a minute, hold up. You been
talkin' to the wrong people with
the wrong info. I'm a unlicensed
pharmacist.

Jesus and Booger get out the car.

INT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN H.S. - MORNING

67

Jesus and Booger walk down the hallway, trying to fight through the crowd. Everyone is asking him the questions, "Where are you going? When will you know?"

Booger pulls out a sign from his backpack, and holds it up. It reads: "DON'T ASK." He turns it over and the other side says: "HE DOESN'T KNOW YET. TRUST IN JESUS."

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

68

Jesus and Booger sit in the back of an overcrowded English Literature class.

MS. JANUS, a young white female, stands at the head of the class.

MS. JANUS

Arthur, I would like you to read for the class.

CLOSE - BOOGER

He slinks down in his chair.

MS. JANUS (OS)

Arthur Sykes. We're waiting.

BOOGER

What page?

MS. JANUS

Jesus, will you please show him where we are.

ANGLE - BOOGER AND JESUS

Jesus points out the paragraph for Booger.

REVERSE - CLASS

The entire class is turned around and looking at Booger.

MS. JANUS

Arthur, let's go.

CLOSE - BOOGER

Booger begins to read, he's trying to read but he can't. Some words he mispronounces, other words he doesn't know at all.

REVERSE - CLASS

Kids who can be ruthless, they start in on him right away.

CLOSE - BOOGER

He is undaunted. He goes on.

MS. JANUS

That's enough, thank you.

Booger won't stop. He struggles on. The class keeps it up.

MS. JANUS (contd)

Arthur, you can stop now.

CLOSE - JESUS

He stands up.

JESUS

The next person that laughs is gonna get a ass whipping.

ANGLE - CLASS

They shut up.

JESUS

Go 'head and finish.

CLOSE - BOOGER

He quickly gets in the final sentence, it is the best read one he did.

INT. LINCOLN'S GYM - DAY

69

WE SEE a half court game in progress. It's 2 on 2.

Jesus and Mance versus Sip and Lonnie.

It is a highly contested game. Back and forth, the two teams battle each other, 21 wins and tempers begin to flare. No one wants to lose.

Sip goes up for a layup and Jesus blocks the shot.

SIP

Hack.

JESUS

What?

SIP

You fouled the fuck out of me.

JESUS
That was all ball.

SIP
Jesus, you hacked me. That's the
only way you block my shot anyway.

MANCE
Sip, why you crying?

SIP
Ain't nobody crying. The man
fouled me. I called it.

LONNIE
That's why I don't like to play
with your ass, Jesus. You always
disputing calls. The man says he
got fouled. Respect the call.

MANCE
It was a bullshit call.

JESUS
Sip, gimme the ball. We're taking
it out.

SIP
Here, you want the ball?
Go get it.

Sip throws the ball from one of the courts to another. The ball travels in a high arc straight into the basket at the other end. He has just made a full court length shot. A miracle shot.

They all stand there amazed, frozen for a second. Then all hell breaks loose.

SIP
A million dollars. A million dollars.
I just won a million dollars.

JESUS
You lucky motherfucker.

MANCE
Do that in a game.

LONNIE
Do it again.

SIP
Jesus, you still fouled me.

ANGLE - COACH CINCOTTA

COACH CINCOTTA

Jesus, I need to see you now in my office.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

70

Jesus walks in all sweaty.

COACH CINCOTTA

Good game?

JESUS

It was, till Sip started cheating.

COACH CINCOTTA

That's a good teammate to have on your side.

JESUS

I guess so, Coach. What's up?

COACH CINCOTTA

I hate to keep busting ya balls but do you have an idea yet, even an inkling?

JESUS

Not yet, Coach.

COACH CINCOTTA

I hope you're not holding out on your coach.

JESUS

That's not the case at all.

COACH CINCOTTA

Lock the door.

Jesus gets up from his seat and locks it.

COACH CINCOTTA (contd)

You can sit back down.

Jesus sits down.

CLOSE - COACH CINCOTTA

He goes into his drawer and pulls out a package and throws it on the desk.

COACH CINCOTTA

Here is another package for you. They thought it might make you decide before the Monday deadline.

ANGLE - OFFICE

Jesus stares at the package in front of him.

COACH CINCOTTA

Jesus, it's for you. Don't be afraid.

Jesus takes it in his hands and looks at the contents. It is all new money, fresh new, crisp hundred dollar bills. A nice, healthy stack of bills.

Jesus puts it down.

COACH CINCOTTA (contd)

It's yours.

JESUS

I cannot accept this.

COACH CINCOTTA

Why stop now? You've been accepting.

JESUS

But you explained to me before that it was a loan.

COACH CINCOTTA

You're talking semantics. The fact remains you took the dough. Whatever you do is fine with me. I'm gonna get taken care of either way. Look, Jesus, I've been there for you. You needed whatever, no problem, I took care of it. You needed money to move out from your crazy uncle. No problem. I just need a little bit of information, something to tell them, they need to hear something, anything.

JESUS

Coach, got nuthin' to say yet.

COACH CINCOTTA

You got a hard head. On the court you're the most coachable kid I've ever had, but off the court I can't tell you a thing.

Jesus gets up to leave.

JESUS

I have class.

COACH CINCOTTA
You forgot something.

Jesus looks at the package on the desk, then walks out.

CLOSE - COACH CINCOTTA

He looks at the money.

INT. UNCLE BUBBA'S APARTMENT - DAY

71

Aunt Sally answers the door.

ANGLE - DOOR

She peers through the key hole then quickly stands back as if she's seen a ghost. Aunt Sally opens the locks and Jake walks in.

JAKE
Thank you for letting me in. I
appreciate it.

Aunt Sally is speechless. She covers her mouth with left hand.

JAKE (contd)
May I sit down?

She points the way to the living room.

ANGLE - LIVING ROOM

Jake sits down uneasily. Finally she speaks.

AUNT SALLY
Why are you here in my home?

JAKE
I know Jesus told you I was
released temporarily. I came to
pay my respects. How have you
been?

AUNT SALLY
Not well Can I get you
something?

JAKE
Tea would be fine if it's not much
trouble.

Aunt Sally leaves to go to the kitchen.

Jake picks a framed picture of his wife that rests on the coffee table in front of him.

CLOSE - PICTURE

Martha is smiling, she is being embraced by a figure, what's strange is that the head of the person has been cut out of the picture.

CLOSE - JAKE

He holds the picture closer to his eyes.

CLOSE - PICTURE

The picture is his wedding day. Somebody has cut his head out of it. WE SEE a man wearing a tuxedo without a head.

CLOSE - JAKE

He looks at it.

ANGLE - LIVING ROOM

She comes back from the kitchen with a tray, on it two cups and a pot of tea. Jake quickly puts the wedding frame back on the coffee table.

AUNT SALLY

Here you go.

JAKE

Thank you.

Jake takes his cup of tea.

AUNT SALLY

I forgot to ask, lemon or milk?
Sugar?

JAKE

Milk with one lump.

Aunt Sally gets up.

CLOSE - AUNT SALLY

She picks up a lamp shade and holds it high over her head.

ANGLE - JAKE

He drinks his tea as the lamp shade comes crashing down on his dome. He falls out of the sofa onto the floor, sparks fly, the lamp was still plugged in. Jake is not knocked out, but he is still groggy. He looks up at Aunt Sally who towers over him.

JAKE'S POV

AUNT SALLY
I feel much better now. Let me
help you onto your feet.

CLOSE - JAKE

JAKE
No, thanks. I'm going to stay down
here. I want us to pray together.

ANGLE - LIVING ROOM

Jake gets off the floor to one knee and bows his head. He
looks at Aunt Sally for a second then she joins him.

JAKE
Lord, I'm trying to reach out
through prayer because I have no
other way to make plain what is in
my heart. If I had my way, if you,
Lord, would grant me the power I
would bring Martha back. But I
can't do that. I also pray to you
in the hope that you being her
sister can somehow get the message
to Martha that I am sorry. And if
you being her sister know of any
other way that I can make contact
with the dead, please, please, let
me know. Amen.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NIGHT

72

Jesus and LaLa walk hand in hand. As they approach a bench,
she lets go of his hand and walks on one side of the bench
and he, the other.

JESUS
Wooah. What are you doing?

LALA
What?

JESUS
You split the bench. Please go
back around and come on this side.

LALA
What does it matter?

JESUS
It matters a lot. You split the
bench, that's bad luck unless you
go back. I can't take any chances
now. Go back.

LaLa goes back and unsplits the bench. He grabs her hand.

LALA

I hope you're happy now.

JESUS

I can't mess around.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

73

They are in the amusement park. Jesus shoots 10 basketballs that all go in the goal. He wins a giant Teddy bear for LaLa.

EXT. WONDER WHEEL - NIGHT

74

The Wonder Wheel is a giant Ferris wheel, it's all lit up.

ANGLE - CAR

The car is rocking back and forth. LaLa sits on top of Jesus as they make love. She is much more aggressive than he is. LaLa is 17 going on 35. She is definitely in her "dirty 30's."

LALA

Yeah, Jesus. Yeah, Jesus. Hit me off proper.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

75

Jake is walking around, looking, searching. He asks some people have they seen Jesus. Some answer, some don't. Some haven't seen him and some have, and point him in the right direction.

EXT. NATHAN'S - NIGHT

76

Jake is eating a Nathan's famous hot dog when he sees Jesus and LaLa arm in arm get into a brand new Chevy Suburban.

ANGLE - JAKE

He runs after them but he is too late. The vehicle pulls off.

ANGLE - STREET

As Jake looks at the drive away, Spivey and Crudup pull up in front of him.

JAKE

You guys couldn't give me a ride and follow them, would you?

CRUDUP
No, we wouldn't.

SPIVEY
We can only follow you.

JAKE
Thanks for nuthin'.

CRUDUP
My, my. Mr. Shuttlesworth, your
son is very popular, everybody
wants the kid.

Spivey and Crudup pull off.

EXT. HENRY HUDSON PARKWAY - NIGHT

77

The Chevy Suburban moves in and out of lanes.

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - NIGHT

78

Jesus is sitting in the back, LaLa sits in front, riding
shotgun next to D'Andre Mackey who is driving.

D'ANDRE
Jesus, I'm glad you finally
consented to this meeting.

JESUS
She bugged me enough.

LALA
No, I didn't.

D'ANDRE
Regardless, it will be worthwhile.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - NIGHT

79

The Chevy Suburban goes across the George Washington Bridge
to New Jersey.

D'ANDRE (VO)
I'm glad you're giving a brother a
shot. I got a lot ideas, just want
to bounce them off you.

EXT. ALPINE, NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

80

Gates slide open as they enter a long driveway leading up to
a huge mansion. Alpine, New Jersey is one of the most
exclusive areas in the tri-state region.

EXT. MANSION

81

The Chevy Suburban parks in front.

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN

82

D'ANDRE

You're going to meet the man. Just listen to what he has to say. It's all good.

ANGLE - DOOR

DOM PAGNOTTI (33), young, sun-tanned, Italian-American, comes out of the mansion to greet them.

DOM

Welcome, welcome. The way things were going I thought this meeting would never take place.

He kisses LaLa.

DOM (contd)

LaLa, you look beautiful as always.

Jesus is checking her out, he makes a mental note of that comment.

DOM (contd)

Ahh, Jesus Shuttlesworth.

He extends his hand, they shake.

JESUS

How are you?

DOM

Good. Excuse me, my name is Dom Pagnotti. May I call you Jesus?

JESUS

That's my given name.

DOM

Jesus Shuttlesworth! Great name. I could get use to saying that, let's go inside.

INT. MANSION - HOUSE

83

The house is huge. Dom leads them on a tour.

DOM

I just had it built, did it from scratch.

LALA

This is beautiful.

DOM

D'Andre, will you please take LaLa to the living room while I discuss business with our friend Jesus.

D'Andre takes LaLa by the hand.

LALA

Don't be long.

INT. GARAGE

84

Dom leads Jesus into his 5 car garage. In it are parked 3 Ferraris, 1 Lamborghini, and a Porsche.

DOM

You like cars?

JESUS

Yeah, I like them a lot. I'm still working on my driver's permit.

DOM

What's your worry? You'll be able to afford a chauffeur.

JESUS

What kind of cars are those?

DOM

Italian cars, the best. Three are Ferraris. The yellow one is a 348 Spyder cost \$120,000. The black one is a Testorossa cost \$180,000. The red one is a 355 Spyder cost me \$130,000, The Lamborghini is a Diablo, that's my heart, sticker price is \$250,000, I got a good price and the last one is a 911 Porsche Carrera only \$90,000.

JESUS

Only 90,000 bucks?

DOM

Let me show you something else.

INT. RACQUETBALL COURT

85

Dom leads Jesus into a superb racquetball court.

DOM

You ever play racquetball before?

JESUS

No. Only Chinese handball.

DOM

Oh, I forgot, your sport is basketball.

Dom presses a button.

A wall spins around and what was once racquetball has turned into a basketball court.

JESUS

Are you in the Mafia? You down with Gotti?

DOM

No, not me. I'm just good at what I do. D'Andre works for me. I have an agency. As you can see I make a lotta money. I want to do the same for you. Listen to me, listen to me. I know what I'm talking about. You need to be with me. Did you know that several NBA teams (which at this point in time I can't say who) are interested in you? I have made the contacts. I know you have considered jumping straight to the pros. The money is there, so apply for the NBA draft now.

JESUS

I'm considering it. I have to weigh all my options.

DOM

I knew right away you had a good head on your shoulders. If you choose to attend school, I can still work with you. Come out early, or stay and get your degree. I can still work the system, make the system work for you. I'm here for you.

JESUS

This is all overwhelming. What kind of agent are you?

DOM

The new kind. I take care of everything. You just concentrate one hundred percent on playing ball. You just leave everything to me. I'll be the best friend you ever had.

JESUS
I'm going to need some time to
think this through.

DOM
You think long, you think wrong.
Let's go see what D'Andre and LaLa
are doing. By the way, anytime you
want to come out and use the court,
or the house, let me know.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

86

Jesus enters his apartment, it is dark but he can hear some
rap coming out of his sister's room.

INT. MARY'S ROOM - NIGHT

87

Mary is fast asleep. She fell asleep with the television on
blasting BET; Video Soul program.

ANGLE - TELEVISION

Jesus turns it off.

INT. JESUS' ROOM - NIGHT

88

Jesus lies on the bed looking at a framed picture on his
desk of his mother.

CLOSE - PICTURE

Martha is smiling at her son.

MARTHA (VO)
Dear Jesus, I hope you are fine. I
thought it might be a little hard
for you being away from home for
the first time.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

89

A 4 years younger Jesus sits in a bunk bed and reads his
mother's letter.

MARTHA (VO)
I had no idea that they had
basketball camps. Thank God, it
got you out of Coney Island
for at least a week this summer.

CUT TO:

INT. SHUTTLESWORTH APARTMENT

90

Martha is sitting at the kitchen table writing this letter.

MARTHA (VO)

You're really serious about this
basketball. That's
good; however, I do wonder
sometimes ...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GARDEN - NIGHT

91

Jake and Jesus are out on the court late at night. Jesus is running suicide wind sprints from one end of the court to another. Jake is on his ass. He won't let his son stop. He can't stop until he completes the drill.

MARTHA (VO)

... whether it's you or your father
that wants to pursue this. I do
know he drives you too hard.

INT. SHUTTLESWORTH APARTMENT - NIGHT

92

In a much happier time, when the Shuttlesworth family was complete, whole, intact, they sit around the kitchen table. WE SEE the Shuttlesworth family 4 years ago. Jake is berating Jesus about the deficiencies in his overall game.

CLOSE - MARTHA

Martha looks at the camera. She is not of their world. She talks to us.

MARTHA

But, Jesus, your father does love
you dearly. Have fun at the camp.
Remember, use basketball as a tool.
Love, Mommy.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

93

Jesus continues reading his mother's letter.

MARTHA (VO)

P.S. Your sister promised me not
to tell you but she misses you
badly.

CUT TO:

INT. JESUS' ROOM - NIGHT

94

WE ARE BACK TO REAL TIME. Jesus reads the letter.

MARTHA (VO)

When you come back please be
nice to her. Big brothers have
to protect their little sisters.

Jesus folds the letter back into the envelope, puts it in his drawer. He goes under his bed and pulls out the shoe box of letters from his father; looks at it momentarily, decides against it and slides it back under the bed.

ANGLE - JESUS

He sits at the edge of his bed dribbling his basketball.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

95

Jake also sits at the edge of his bed dribbling his basketball too.

INT. JESUS' ROOM - NIGHT

96

CLOSE - JESUS

Jesus dribbles the ball between his legs, low to the floor.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

97

CLOSE - JAKE

Jake dribbles the ball between his legs, dribbles low to the floor also. All of a sudden he stops dribbling the ball. Jake hears something. Something is banging up against his wall.

ANGLE - ROOM

The banging continues.

DAKOTA (OS)

Fuck me, Daddy. Fuck me, Daddy.

CLOSE - JAKE

His face becomes torn apart.

INT. DAKOTA'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

98

A john is ramming it hard to Dakota. The noise Jake hears is the headboard of her bed banging against the thin wall that separates the two motel rooms.

DAKOTA
Knock it out, baby. Harder,
harder.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

99

Jake begins to bounce the basketball off the pounding wall. He does it in the same rhythm of the banging headboard against the wall. As the banging accelerates, he too quickens his throws of the basketball.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GARDEN - NIGHT

100

It's a hot summer night. Jake and Jesus are playing a game, one on one. A crowd watches this one. Father and son, going at it, tooth and nail. They both are playing for keeps. Jake is the one who is doing most of the talking. He's selling wolf tickets, talking much smack, much trash. Jesus trying not to get caught up in this head game continues to play.

Jesus is driving up for a lay up, when Jake fouls the shit out of him. This sends Jesus flying to the asphalt. This foul in the NBA would have definitely been called a FLAGRANT FOUL plus ejection on a 5 game suspension. It's the type of foul that would make Dennis Rodman proud. The crowd oohs and aahhhs.

ANGLE - COURT

JESUS

Foul.

JAKE

No harm. No foul. I hardly touched you.

JESUS

Respect my call. That wasn't a foul or a hack, that was attempted murder.

JAKE

Get up and stop crying like a baby.

Jesus looks up at his father.

JESUS

What are you trying to prove?

JAKE

I said get up.

JESUS

What are you trying to prove?

JAKE
Take the ball out and stop crying
like a little bitch.

Jesus gets up and Jake throws him the ball hard.
I mean hard, dead in his chest. Jesus looks at his father
like the crazy man he is and throws the basketball over the
fence across the street.

JESUS
I quit.

Jesus starts to walk off the court. People part for him
like he's Moses and they're the Red Sea.

HIGH ANGLE - THE GARDEN

Jesus splits the crowd as he walks out of court. Jake stays
behind.

INT. SHUTTLESWORTH APARTMENT - NIGHT

101

Jesus is at the dinner table with his mother and sister.

CLOSE- JESUS

He is playing with his food.

CLOSE - MARTHA

She looks at his untouched plate.

MARTHA
You don't like my food?

ANGLE - TABLE

JESUS
The food is fine. I'm just not
hungry.

MARTHA
Where's your father?

JESUS
I don't know and I don't care.

MARY
Daddy must have beat him again in
basketball.

Jesus kicks his sister under the table.

MARY
Owww!

MARTHA

Please leave your sister alone.
What did I tell you about hitting
her?

JESUS

Tell her to shut up then.

MARTHA

I will do no such thing. You, your
father and these basketball ...
wars have to stop.

WE HEAR the door open.

ANGLE - DINING ROOM

Jake walks in slowly and stands above his chair at the
table.

MARTHA

I just asked your son where you
were. Please sit down. Your
dinner is getting cold.

Jake stares at his son who is avoiding his gaze. Jesus
looks down into his plate.

ANGLE - TABLE

Jake sits down.

JAKE

When you threw the ball over the
fence it got lost. I paid my good
hard earned money for that
basketball.

MARTHA

We can always get a new ball.

JAKE

But that ball is lost. I liked
that ball. Plus he has to learn to
respect other people's property.
That was my ball. Not his.

JESUS

Mommy, can I be excused!

JAKE

No, sit your ass down.

JESUS

I'm finished.

Jesus takes his plate and stands up from the table.

JAKE

You are not excused.

MARTHA

Jake, he's done.

JAKE

Well, I'm not. Sit ya black ass down. I'm ya Daddy and ya'll do as I say.

Jesus looks at his father, then goes to the kitchen. Jake flips over the dinner table and charges toward his son. ALL HELL HAS BROKEN LOOSE. IT'S BEDLAM. Mary is screaming, while father and son are engaged in battle. Martha tries, attempts to get in the middle of this Donnybrook.

JAKE

You gonna quit on me. Like a little faggot. You gonna quit on me. How are you gonna make it to the NBA if you get mad because somebody fakes you hard? I thought I had only one daughter.

JESUS

I hate you. I hate you. Get off me.

JAKE

Where is yar heart? Where is your backbone? What kinda man are you? Why did you punk out, bitch up on me and quit?

Martha jumps on her husband's back, trying the best she can to separate them. Jake turns on her and grabs his wife's neck and starts to choke her.

JAKE

You turning against me? Don't you ever go against me in front of the kids. Do you hear me, woman?

Mary is on the phone to the police. She is hysterical. Jesus is trying to loosen his father's grip. Jake bangs Martha's head violently against the kitchen sink, blood flies everywhere. Jake has fractured her skull.

MARY

Mommy.

JESUS

Oh God. Oh God.

Jake cries out in a long, long scream. He holds his wife in his arms on the kitchen floor as WE HEAR police sirens.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - DAY

102

Jake is watching the sea gulls, watching the waves roll in.

ANGLE - BOARDWALK

He is joined by his son Jesus.

JAKE

Let's walk.

ANGLE - TRACKING SHOT

JAKE

Thank you so much for meeting with me.

He looks at Jesus. He doesn't say anything.

JAKE (contd)

My all-time favorite ballplayer is Earl Monroe. Earl the Pearl. The Pearl was bad, people talk about him helping the Knicks win their 2nd championship. But the real Earl the Pearl was when he was with the Bullets, before he got traded to the Knicks. When he got to New York, they put shackles on his game, put him in a straight jacket. Earl was the original shake'n bake. In the playgrounds of Philly, where he grew up you know what they called him?

JESUS

What?

JAKE

Jesus. That's what they called him. He was the truth, the real truth. Of course when the white media got hold of it they turned it around to Black Jesus. No black man could be called Jesus. Now Jordan is called that sometimes. That's the real truth about how you got your name.

JESUS

I was named after Earl Monroe and not Jesus in the Bible. Oh shit.

CUT TO:

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE of EARL MONROE doing his thing.

JAKE (VO)

Watching Jesus play, create, pass, spin was a true religious experience.

CUT TO:

JESUS

Do you know how much time I spent on my bent knees praying? Praying because you and Mommy told me to. Praying for what? I didn't know what I was doing that for. Eventually I ended up praying I wouldn't have to pray anymore.

ANGLE - BOARDWALK

Spivey and Crudup are following them at a safe distance.

ANGLE - TRACKING SHOT

JAKE

Son, I want you to go to Big State. That's the whole reason I've been let out. You go to Big State, if you can find it in your heart, I'll be able to get out on early parole.

JESUS

So that's what this is all about? Daddy, you're just like everybody else.

JAKE

Everybody else didn't bring you into the world. Everybody else isn't your father. What do you know about your lady friend LaLa? Do you really know her? Many a great man has had his downfall because of a woman.

JESUS

You talking about Samson and Delilah?

JAKE

Him too. You do know the Bible.
Just be careful.

JESUS

I'm at the point when I don't trust
no one.

JAKE

I've got to know, is Big State even
a finalist?

JESUS

It's in my top 10.

JAKE

So, I got at least a 1 in 10 shot.
I'll take those odds.

Jake gives his son a hug. Jesus still doesn't hug him back,
he isn't giving up any love.

Jesus sees Booger sitting on a rail looking at the both of
them. Jake says hello to Booger as he leaves the two
cousins on the boardwalk.

BOOGER

It's good to see you two getting
along.

JESUS

It's not as it looks.

BOOGER

Jesus, you got to declare a school.
Tell me something, my father is
driving me fucking nuts.

JESUS

Monday morning.

BOOGER

For Christ sakes. Damn. All I
hear is Jesus this and Jesus that.
I'm sick of always being compared
to Jesus. How can I win?

JESUS

Me or Jesus of Nazareth?

BOOGER

You. Jesus of Coney Island.

JESUS

C'mon, Booger.

BOOGER

From now on you got to call me by my real name. Booger is dead, dead like the names Lew Alcindor, Cassius Clay, dead like Prince.

JESUS

Everybody has always called you Booger. I can't help it if you use to pick your nose and eat ya boogers when you were little.

BOOGER

Why you have to bring that up? I'm tired of being made fun of, nobody's making a monkey out of me anymore.

JESUS

I'll call you Arthur from now on. But what is really bothering you?

BOOGER

What's bothering me is you. Jesus bothers me. I love you like a brother but you have made my life miserable. My own father hates me because I'm not you.

JESUS

That's not true.

BOOGER

The hell it ain't. He compares my shit to you all the time. I'm living in your large shadow. Mr. Perfect. Mr. Divine. Everything comes so natural to you, just flows.

JESUS

I will admit that I'm gifted, I've been blessed, but don't think for a moment that I haven't been working my black ass off since I was 10. You know, you were right there alongside me. Nobody has given me anything. So you're not the basketball player I am. So what? I grew, you didn't.

BOOGER

You a lie. People have been giving you stuff since you were 10. Everybody knew you were gonna make it. Plus, you look better. You're

(MORE)

BOOGER (contd)
smarter, passed your SAT's. You
got girlies all over you. You got
fine ass LaLa. What do I got
besides a maniac for a Pops?

JESUS
Let's not bring up fathers. All
I can say is we're blood, first
cousins, Jesus loves you.

BOOGER
Will you stop saying that?

JESUS
I love you.

BOOGER
Motherfucker, you really think you
are Jesus don't you? Think you're
shit don't stink. Well, if you're
Jesus Christ Superstar, let me see
you go out, right there in the
motherfucking Atlantic Ocean, let
my eyes see Jesus walk on
motherfucking water.

Jesus has to laugh.

BOOGER (contd)
Can you do that, Jesus?

Jesus looks at Booger, walks down the steps to the beach and
goes towards the Atlantic Ocean. Booger follows him.

BOOGER (contd)
You do that, I won't only kiss your
cloth, I'll suck ya dick too.

Jesus hearing that turns around and chases after Booger.

INT. UNCLE BUBBA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

103

Uncle Bubba and Aunt Sally are sitting in the kitchen. They
face Jake who holds Mary on his knee.

UNCLE BUBBA
I hear you owe me for that lamp
shade you broke.

Jake looks at Aunt Mary, who looks away to the windows.

JAKE
That I do. It was an accident.
I'm sorry.

UNCLE BUBBA

Just make sure it gets replaced.
What can I do for you?

JAKE

I would like to first thank you and
Aunt Sally for caring after my girl
and Jesus since I've been away.

UNCLE BUBBA

Don't be silly. What are families
for?

JAKE

And I'm looking for my son. I saw
him earlier in the day.

MARY

Jesus is gone.

JAKE

Gone where?

MARY

Gone out of town.

UNCLE BUBBA

He went to Sodom or Gomorrah. I
forget which one.

Jake ignores that crack.

JAKE

Did he say when he was coming back?

MARY

Saturday.

UNCLE BUBBA

I guess you'll have to wait like
the rest of the world.

The look of panic overtakes Jake.

JAKE

Boo, did he say where he was going?

MARY

I think he said something like "get
the hell out of Dodge." Do you
know where that is, Daddy?

JAKE

Boo, it's a long, long way from
Coney Island.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

104

CHICK DEAGAN (21) 6 feet 8 inches -- First Team All American basketball player, a junior on the squad for TECH UNIVERSITY leads Jesus on a tour of the sprawling campus.

WE SEE acres and acres of rolling hills and new buildings. The campus is layered. Banners hang from dorm windows. They read: JESUS - THE SECOND COMING - JESUS IS LOVE - JESUS SAVES THE DAY - JESUS IS OUR SALVATION.

JESUS

Thank God, it's Friday.

CHICK

Bro', I'm really happy that you were able to make it.

JESUS

I'm sorry it was such quick notice.

CHICK

Are you crazy? I know all the schools in the country are sweating you. How many other schools have you visited?

JESUS

Four.

Two good looking white coeds, JUNE and LYNN, approach Chick. They each give him a kiss on the lips. Jesus looks on in amazement.

CHICK (contd)

Hey, girls.

JUNE/LYNN

Whassup, Chick?

CHICK

I know the both of you have heard of Jesus Shuttlesworth.

JUNE

Oh my God!

LYNN

It can't be!

JUNE

Stop fucking around Chick.

CHICK

Tell 'em who you are.

Jesus is embarrassed.

JESUS

That's me.

LYNN

You're Jesus of Coney Island? You gotta come to this school. With you and Chick we'll definitely be going to the Final Four.

JUNE

Go? We'll win the whole thing.

LYNN

You are going to go here, aren't you?

CHICK

We hope so. It's my job to convince him. This is his last visit to any schools.

JUNE

Jesus, Tech U. is a really cool place. You'll love it here. It's groovy.

LYNN

It's really cool. Hope to see ya around.

They both give Jesus a goodbye kiss, planted right on the smacker. Jesus looks at Chick who shrugs.

CHICK

Let's go meet Coach York. He's a cool white boy.

INT. ARENA - DAY

105

Chick leads Jesus into the empty 18,000 seat arena. The lights go out. WE HEAR:

P.A. ANNOUNCER

Now introducing number 10 --
freshman from Brooklyn,
New York -- Jeeeeesusss
Shuttlesworth!!!!

The announcement is followed by a thunderous ovation.

ANGLE - SCOREBOARD

It flashes JESUS. Then WE SEE a highlight film of Jesus' great plays intercut with scenes from Biblical movies like THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD, LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, SPARTACUS.

CLOSE - JESUS

He is in awe.

ANGLE - ARENA

The lights come up and COACH YORK (40) a young, handsome looking white male stands behind Jesus with a jersey with his name on it and the number 10.

COACH YORK

Hello, son.

JESUS

Hello, Coach York.

COACH YORK

I hope that Chick here has been a gracious host.

JESUS

Chick has been great.

COACH YORK

Good, 'cause we really know how to treat our student athletes right. Isn't that right, Chick?

CHICK

Coach ain't lying.

He hands Jesus his Tech U. jersey.

COACH YORK

This is for you. I hope you don't think we're too forward or aggressive with the highlight film or the jersey but that's the way we are here at Tech U. We show Love. Why beat around the bush? We've scouted you since you were in junior high school. We know all about you. We love you. You're a great kid. Not only a great ballplayer, a great student but a great human being. When I read about how you've been raising your sister all by yourself it made me wanna cry. I said to myself, "That's the kind of young man that will be the backbone of this great country, not just the Tech University Basketball Team." Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

JESUS

I do.

COACH YORK

Chick?

CHICK

Yes, Coach.

COACH YORK

I'm a pretty religious guy but I don't make a public showing of it like a lot of other coaches do who shall remain nameless. But when I heard you were coming to visit I got down on my hands and knees and prayed to God. Dear Lord, please deliver Jesus to us. Son, are you listening? I got down on my knees and asked God to let Tech University be the Throne of Jesus. As you already know this will be the most important decision of your life. Son, don't blow it. We have everything here for you. We can prepare you for life. For God knows you can't play this great game of basketball forever. There, I've said enough. I've said too much.

JESUS

Coach York, thank you so much.
I deeply appreciate it.

COACH YORK

Not only is he the top prospect in the nation, he's well mannered also. Chick, this kid is heaven sent. Praise the Lord.

Coach York slaps him on the back and leaves.

CHICK

He gets excited a little bit.
Don't mind him. Coach is Kool and the Gang.

EXT. COMMONS - DAY

106

As Chick and Jesus walk through the Commons, the student body starts to chant -- JESUS -- JESUS -- JESUS.

Two doofy white boys get down on their knees and start to bow in front of Jesus. Chick pulls him away.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

107

Chick and Jesus sit at a table and grub.

CHICK

Yo, cuz' you'll love it here. We play in front of 18,000 people every home game. All that noise, man, it has you geeked up. This coming season we're gonna be on national television five times. It's all that and a bag of Baked Lay's Potato Chips.

Four very attractive white coeds, MOLLY, KATHY, BETH and JANE stop by the table holding their trays.

MOLLY

Hi, Chick. Hi, Jesus.

CHICK

Hi, Molly. Hi, Kathy, Beth. Hi, Jane.

JESUS

Hi.

All four girls giggle like mad and scoot away.

JESUS (contd)

What did I say?

CHICK

We got some serious freaks up in here in this piece.

JESUS

What are you talkin' 'bout?

CHICK

A little somethin' somethin'. You ever been with a white girlie before?

JESUS

Hell, no.

CHICK

I said the same thing you said before I got up into this mug. I was into my black bag also, beautiful fine dark sisters. Nubian sisters. Africa. The whole nine.

JESUS

I got a woman, back in Brooklyn.
Her name is LaLa and we're in love.

CHICK

I ain't talkin' 'bout love, I'm
talkin' 'bout these white freaks
here at Tech U. They just love
some ball playin' brothers, let you
get your freak on.

JESUS

What about the sisters?

CHICK

They all right but they make you
work too hard. The white girlies
will wash your dirty drawers, cook
for you, give you money, let you
drive the Benz Daddy bought for
them. They'll go the extra mile to
hook a brother up. 24-7. What
sister you know is gonna do all
that?

JESUS

Nah, ya lying.

CHICK

Word is bond. Let me ask you a
question. You ever been with a
white girl before?

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHLETIC DORM - NIGHT

108

Chick leads Jesus down the hallway.

JESUS

No.

CHICK

You ever been with two white girls
at the same time?

He opens the door.

JESUS

No.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

109

CHICK

Go straight through to the back.

Jesus walks to the bedroom. He opens the door.

ANGLE - BED

Two attractive white coeds, BUFFY and SUZIE, with big breasts and blond hair are lying naked on the bed waiting for Jesus. They probably wait tables at Hooters to send themselves through school.

CHICK

Jesus, say hello to Buffy and
Suzie. I know you'll represent.
Brooklyn's in da house.

Chick closes the door behind him.

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS

Jesus getting his freak on with BUFFY and SUZIE, the Dynamic Duo, a terrific tag team. He's in the middle of a Hooter's sandwich.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN H.S. - DAY

110

It's three o'clock, school is over. Jake waits as the students pour out. WE NOTE several very young black and Puerto Rican mothers pushing their babies in strollers.

ANGLE - JAKE

He finds who he is looking for -- LaLa.

JAKE

Hello, I'm Jesus' father.

LALA

How are you?

JAKE

Good, may I talk to you?

LALA

About what?

JAKE

My son. He loves you.

LALA

I feel the same.

ANGLE - STREET

D'Andre has driven up to the both of them. He looks on.

JAKE

He waiting for you?

LALA
He's my brother.

JAKE
Whatever you're being paid, I can
do more.

LALA
Pay whom what? And you ain't got
no real money anyway - anyhow.

JAKE
LaLa, c'mon. It's past 3 o'clock,
school is over. So you can stop
the act. I know and you know. I
just figure if we work together we
can both get what we want.

LALA
Mr. Shuttlesworth, I don't know who
you've been talking to or who you
think I am but I'm the only one who
really cares for Jesus.

D'Andre blows his horn. LaLa looks at Jake, walks away and
gets in D'Andre's Chevy Suburban. They drive away.

CLOSE - JAKE

He kicks at a piece of garbage on the sidewalk, he's mad his
ploy didn't work. Jake feels his pockets, he pulls out his
beeper, it was on vibrate.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

111

Jake is at a phone booth.

JAKE
Yeah, it's me. Ten minutes, fine.

EXT. NATHAN'S FAMOUS - DAY

112

Jake with Spivey and Crudup devour Nathan's Famous hot dogs.

CRUDUP
I can eat twenty of these.

SPIVEY
How's it goin', Jake?

JAKE
It's coming along, slower than
expected but it's all going to work
out in the end.

SPIVEY
I hope you're right, for your sake.

CRUDUP

When is Jesus coming back to town?

JAKE

So you know?

CRUDUP

The whole world knows.

JAKE

Would it be possible to get an advance. My money is funny. I'm about flat broke.

SPIVEY

Now you wouldn't be trying to buy a train, bus or plane ticket outta here, would you?

CRUDUP

Trying to pull a fast one, huh?

JAKE

No, not at all. I just met a friend.

CRUDUP

A female friend?

JAKE

Yes, a female friend, and I want to take her out some place other than Nathan's.

SPIVEY

Don't tell me you fell for that broken down ho you've been messin' wit'?

CRUDUP

What's a ho? Like a gardening tool?

SPIVEY

Ho -- whore -- ho -- whore.

CRUDUP

You guys talkin' Ebonics. Go right ahead.

Jake and Spivey both look at Crudup.

JAKE

The lady's name is Dakota.

SPIVEY

No need to get defensive. Knock yourself out.

CRUDUP

We're men also. We know you've been locked up for 3½ years, pussy is pussy.

SPIVEY

That must be some hard shit, no poontang for 3½ years. You didn't ...

JAKE

No I didn't.

SPIVEY

Nobody tossed your salad?

JAKE

I didn't engage in any homosexual activity while I was away.

CRUDUP

I read that in prison the guy that is doing it (not the guy who's getting it up the old kazoo, the Hershey highway), he doesn't consider himself a faggot. You think that's true?

Spivey goes into his wallet and pulls out the dough.

SPIVEY

Just make sure she's clean. That could be some dirty ass pussy ... knock yourself out.

EXT. THE STRIP - NIGHT

113

Jake walks amongst the working women on the Strip. It's a well known block in Coney Island that men from all over the tri-state area come to cop. Several women approach him, but he's not having it. Jake is looking for Dakota.

ANGLE - CORNER

Jake spots her. She's busily working her corner.

DAKOTA

Beat it. Can't you see I'm working? You standing next to me is bad for business.

JAKE

I got money.

DAKOTA
Now we're talkin'.

INT. OCEANSIDE MOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

114

They walk down the hallway.

JAKE
My room or yours?

DAKOTA
Yours, unless you want Sweetness
barging in.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

115

DAKOTA
I like talkin' to you a lot but
don't let that fool you. There is
no free pussy here. No freebies,
Sweetness will beat my ass.

JAKE
How much?

DAKOTA
How much you want to spend?

JAKE
All of it.

DAKOTA
How long you been locked up?

JAKE
One thousand four hundred and
sixty-one days. How many tricks
have you done in that same period?

DAKOTA
All I count is the money.

JAKE
Just pretend I'm not buying it.

DAKOTA
I'm a good actress.

JAKE
I guess that's a requirement of the
job, being able to act. To act
like it means something, that these
strangers mean something.

DAKOTA
Once in a while it's not an act.

Jake takes Dakota's top off. Jake kisses Dakota's breast and they fall onto the bed, he is on top of her.

ANGLE - BED

Jake starts to dry hump Dakota. He screams out, as he reaches his climax and his body goes limp on top of her.

CLOSE - DAKOTA AND JAKE

She gently kisses his forehead.

DAKOTA

That's OK, baby. That's OK. I know one thousand four hundred and sixty-one days is a long time.

JAKE

I'm sorry.

DAKOTA

Nuthin' to be sorry about. We got all night. I'm turning the meter off.

Jake kisses Dakota with 1,461 days of passion, lust, desire, gratefulness and fondness, everything that is pent up inside him.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. BROOKLYN-QUEENS EXPRESSWAY - DAY

116

A silver Lexus flies through the traffic.

INT. LEXUS - DAY

117

It is Uncle Bubba behind the wheel, his nephew sits next to him.

UNCLE BUBBA

How was the trip?

JESUS

It was good. Whose car?

UNCLE BUBBA

Ohh, this brand new Lexus. Well, technically it's mine. The car is registered in my name but it's for you. Nice, isn't it?

JESUS

For me? I never asked for a car. Did I ever ask for a car?

UNCLE BUBBA

I asked for you.

JESUS

Uncle Bubba, are you out of your mojo mind? You could be jeopardizing my whole shit. If I get seen in this car that could be my ass.

UNCLE BUBBA

The way it was explained to me, as long as the Lexus is in my name, it's all good.

JESUS

Shit is all fucked up. Take it back, give it back, do whatever you have to do. Get rid of the Lexus, and I don't want to know who you got it from.

UNCLE BUBBA

Is it the color? They have it in black also.

JESUS

Take it back.

INT. JESUS' APARTMENT - DAY

119

Jesus opens the door and he is greeted by 2 Jack Russell terriers. The puppies are all over him. Mary runs to the door.

MARY

Jesus, you're home.

JESUS

Where did these dogs come from?

MARY

Get down, Adam and Eve.

JESUS

Adam and Eve?

MARY

I figured names from the Bible would be cool.

JESUS

Mary, where did these puppies come from?

MARY

Why, you don't like them?

JESUS

That's not the point, whether I like 'em or not, answer me now.

MARY

This man gave them to me?

JESUS

What man?

MARY

This nice man. He said he knew you were my brother and this was a present for me. He told me to tell you to call him when you got back.

Jesus grabs the card.

JESUS

Don't you ever, ever accept another gift as long as you live from strangers. You call this guy back and tell him to come get Adam and Eve.

MARY

But he wants you to call him.

JESUS

What did I say?

MARY

You ain't my daddy.

JESUS

I'm yo daddy now. Dial. And they better not shit all over the house.

He hands her the phone with BAD INTENTIONS if she doesn't call.

EXT. CYPRESS HILLS CEMETERY - DAY

120

Jake stands before the marker of his wife's grave.

CLOSE - JAKE

He looks at the flowers in his hands.

ANGLE - GRAVE

Jake places the flowers down beside the marker, then he sits down on the ground.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NIGHT

121

Jesus and LaLa sit down on a bench on the boardwalk. The full moon stares down at the two teenagers from above.

LALA

So how was your trip?

JESUS

OK.

LALA

Did you meet any woman?

JESUS

No, I said hello, that's about it.

LALA

Did you fuck any woman?

JESUS

Hell, no.

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS

of Jesus and the blond haired, blue eyed Dynamic Duo tag team doing much work, getting busy.

JESUS (VO, contd)

Not me.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JESUS AND LALA

LALA

Don't think I've never heard stories about those white college bitches.

JESUS

Me, with a white girl? Please. My mother would be turning over in her grave.

LALA

Then she's spinning.

JESUS

Please don't talk 'bout my mother.

LALA

D'Andre and Dom need to know something.

JESUS

Jesus Christ, has the whole wide world bugged? You're in cahoots with them, aren't you? Tell the truth. Stop frontin'. Just tell the truth.

LALA

Why shouldn't I get paid? Why shouldn't LaLa get something out of this? Everybody else is.

JESUS

I can't believe this.

LALA

Believe it. I believed you when you said you would never leave me. When you begged me to have that abortion. I believed you.

JESUS

We both agreed.

LALA

I wanted that child.

CUT TO:

INT. WONDER WHEEL - DAY

122

Jesus and LaLa are riding in one of the cars.

JESUS

A baby is gonna hurt my chances of going to college. The top schools might be scared away. Plus, baby, I'm too young, we're too young. We ain't ready, too much responsibility. What's the rush? We have a whole lifetime ahead of us.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JESUS AND LALA

WE ARE BACK IN REAL TIME.

JESUS

I gave you the money. I went to
the clinic. I was there for you.
How did we get pregnant anyway?
Let's talk about that.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE BOARDWALK - NIGHT

123

LaLa is on top of Jesus on the sand.

JESUS

Are you sure?

LALA

I'm straight. I can't get pregnant
now.

JESUS

Are you sure?

LaLa starts to really move up and down on Jesus.

LALA

I'm not getting pregnant. I just
want to feel you inside of me
without a jimmy.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JESUS AND LALA

WE ARE BACK IN REAL TIME.

JESUS

I can't get pregnant. I just want
to feel you inside of me.

LALA

LaLa has to look out for herself.

JESUS

You played yourself. Don't think I
don't know 'bout that D'Andre.

LALA

So what? I've read all about those
high school sweethearts who get
left behind. I've seen that movie
many a time. I told 'em nobody can
tell Jesus what to do but they

(MORE)

LALA (contd)
 insisted. If they were stupid enough to give me some loot to use the influence over you that I never had, so be it. They put the money in my hand with the promise of more to follow. Your life is set, you got no worries. But don't worry about LaLa. LaLa will always take care of herself.

INT. UNCLE BUBBA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

124

Aunt Sally has cooked a big Sunday dinner. Seated around the kitchen table are Uncle Bubba, Aunt Sally, Jesus, Booger and Mary. All are feasting on fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, candied yams, string beans, potato salad. Everybody is greasin'. This is the Last Supper; Jesus and his disciples.

UNCLE BUBBA
 Nothing like my wife's Sunday chicken dinners. Can't beat it with a hammer.

AUNT SALLY
 Well, it's a special occasion. One more day and we can all go back to our normal lives.

BOOGER
 Except Jesus.

UNCLE BUBBA
 Who wants a normal life? Not me. I need some excitement.

AUNT SALLY
 He's talking for himself.

JESUS
 Uncle Bubba, I want to ask you a favor.

UNCLE BUBBA
 What are families for?

Jesus laughs. He knows the answer to his uncle's question.

JESUS
 Tonight before I go to bed I'm going to make one of the most important decisions in my life. Can you spare some of that John the Conqueror Root?

UNCLE BUBBA

Did I hear correctly? You want your old Uncle Bubba to work the mojo for you?

JESUS

I'm not taking any chances.

UNCLE BUBBA

I can do that, pull out my special powerful stuff.

AUNT SALLY

Jesus, please don't encourage your Uncle Bubba.

INT. OCEANSIDE MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

125

Spivey, Crudup and Jake sit in the motel lobby.

CRUDUP

Let me see your leg.

Jake kicks his leg out and Crudup inspects the electronic ankle bracelet. He unlocks and relocks it. It is still functioning properly.

SPIVEY

I hope you've had your fun and games because it looks like you're going back to the hoosegow, to the joint.

CRUDUP

How did Pacino say it? Attica! Attica! Attica!

JAKE

The buzzer hasn't gone off yet. There is still some time left on the clock.

CRUDUP

I know we've developed sort of a friendship this past week but, buddy, don't let that fool you. A beating awaits you here if you try to pull a fast one.

JAKE

I appreciate the both of you guys helping me out. I give you my word. I will not try to bolt.

SPIVEY

Tell your lady friend we said bye. Hurry back down.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

126

Jake sits on the bed with Dakota.

DAKOTA

What happens if Jesus doesn't do it?

JAKE

He will.

DAKOTA

Can you be sure? You don't know that.

JAKE

If that happens I go back to Attica.

DAKOTA

Let's get out of here.

JAKE

Where to? How far could I get with this tracking device on my ankle, with a manhunt on you and I. A black fugitive and a white prostitute. We could really go far away without being captured.

DAKOTA

With or without you, I'm breaking out. I can't take another ass whipping from that fucking pimp Sweetness. I can't take fucking another john. I'm outta here.

JAKE

Even if I have to go back things have to be right with my son.

DAKOTA

I know. I know. I'll write you in the joint. I can wait another one thousand four hundred and sixty-one days.

Dakota kisses Jake as if it's for the last time.

INT. OCEANSIDE MOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

126

As Jake comes out from his room he sees Sweetness banging hard on Dakota's door.

SWEETNESS

Hey Dakota! Open the damn door.
I know your ass is in there hiding.
Don't make me have to bitch slap
you.

Sweetness takes out his key, opens up the door, and enters
her room.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

127

Dakota's ear is pressed up against the door listening to her
pimp.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

128

Sweetness closes the door.

SWEETNESS

You seen my bitch Dakota?

JAKE

I haven't seen any bitches.

SWEETNESS

I pray to God she's not finding
refuge in your room, but that's
cool. Ya ass ain't always gonna be
around. I don't mind you fucking
my bitch, that's her job. Dakota
is a ho. A fine white ho. What I
do mind is that you're getting that
fine white ass free. In my line of
work that is considered stealing,
grand theft, larceny. A pimp of my
stature can't be having one of his
best ho's giving the goods away for
free. What you fail to realize is
that I own that white pussy,
Sweetness' property, not yours.

JAKE

Who in God's name decided to call
you Sweetness?

Sweetness turns around and pimp-walks down the hallway.
Jake stands, watches him in disbelief.

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

129

Dakota sits on the floor, head up against the door.

EXT. THE GARDEN - NIGHT

130

The state vehicle pulls up alongside the court. Jake gets out.

SPIVEY

We will be close. Remember, you gave your word.

They pull away.

Jake walks onto the court where Jesus is shooting free throws.

ANGLE - COURT

JAKE

So here we are. The judgement day.
You and me. Jake and Jesus.
Father and son.

Jesus doesn't say a word. He keeps shooting.

JAKE (contd)

Talk to me, son.

Jesus keeps shooting. Jake pulls out the letter of intent.

JAKE (contd)

I can't ask you to forgive me anymore. I can't beg. Cuz' if that's what you want me to do, get down on my hands and knees and beg you for forgiveness, I can't do that.

Jake grabs the ball to get his attention.

JAKE (contd)

Let's make this simple. This is a letter of intent for you to sign to declare Big State. I'll play you a game of one on one, first man scores 11 baskets wins. I win, ya sign. You win, I tear it up. You'll never have to see me again. I go back to Attica. Isn't that what you want anyway?

Jake hands Jesus back the ball.

JESUS

Wait up, hold up. You play me one on one. I win, you leave me the hell alone?

JAKE

Son, that's the deal.

JESUS

Bet. You take the ball out.

Jesus throws the ball hard to his father. Jake dribbles twice, backs in, attempts to shoot and Jesus blocks the shot, then retrieves the loose ball.

JESUS (contd)

You must be crazy, or senile.
Jake, you're an old, old man. You
can't beat me. Those days have
long since passed.

Jesus who has a lightning quick first step drives past his father on the baseline for a thunderous dunk.

JESUS (contd)

Yeah, yeah, now mamaduka, now
mamaduka. You use to be able to
beat me up on the court. Not
anymore.

JAKE

What's with all this trash talkin',
just shut up and play.

Jesus backs his father in under the goal, then explodes over him for another rim rattling dunk.

Jesus continues to completely dominate his father. Layups, dunks, fall away jumpers, baby hooks. Jake is getting pummeled by his son's full repertoire.

CLOSE - JESUS

JESUS

What's the score? 10 zip.
I believe that is point game.

JAKE

I know what the score is. Take the
ball out.

Jake hasn't given up. He's not a quitter. He continues to attempt to play his son tight. Jesus throws a shot off the backboard, in mid flight he catches the carom and slams it back with the left hand, with much authority.

JESUS

Game. Score Jesus 11, Jake zip.
Son 11. Father zip. Who got next?
Who got next? Who got next?

JAKE

So, son, are you happy now? Are you a man now? Is this gonna bring your mother back? Now that you beat me does that mean you can stop hating me? Can we be father and son again? Can we?

JESUS

You ain't my Daddy?

Jake hands Jesus the envelope which he crumples up into a ball and shoots at the basket. The crumpled envelope misses its mark. It doesn't go in.

JESUS (contd)

Ooppps, first shot I missed all night.

Jake starts to walk off the court.

JESUS (contd)

Why you leaving? Best 2 out of 3. You taught me never to be a sore loser.

ANGLE - COURT

Spivey and Crudup suddenly appear at one entrance.

SPIVEY

OK, Jake, let's all go back home. Game is over.

CLOSE - JAKE

He looks at them. Then starts to walk away in the opposite direction.

ANGLE - COURT

SPIVEY

Don't do it. Stop.

Jake from a walk, to a trot, begins to run. Spivey and Crudup tear out after him. Guns are drawn.

CRUDUP

Stop! Stop!

WE HEAR SHOTS RING OUT.

CLOSE - JESUS

JESUS

No! No!

INT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN GYM - MORNING

131

The gym is packed. Coach Cincotta stands behind a makeshift podium underneath a basket. Television crews, reporters, photographers, journalists, Lincoln students and Coney Island residents. All stand before the coach.

COACH CINCOTTA

I will read a prepared statement
... Please excuse me for not being
in your presence this Monday
morning but as you might gather my
family and I under the present
circumstances wish to be alone.

CLOSE

WE SEE the faces of Mance, Sip, Lonnie, Big Time Willie,
LaLa and D'Andre amongst the crowd.

WE NOW HEAR the voice of Jesus.

JESUS (VO)

This past week has been a very
difficult one for me. I've done a
lot of praying and have asked for
guidance from above. I believe the
right hand of God has pointed the
way. My sister Mary will be coming
with me, she will attend 7th grade.

CLOSE - COACH CINCOTTA

COACH CINCOTTA

This September I will be enrolled
at Big State University on a full
athletic scholarship. This is the
right place for me.

ANGLE - GYMNASIUM

The gym explodes with noise.

JESUS (VO)

In closing, my family and I send
our prayers out to my father Jake
Shuttlesworth.

CLOSE - COACH CINCOTTA

COACH

May God bless him. Yours truly,
Jesus Shuttlesworth.

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

132

Booger is surrounded by Mance, Sip and Lonnie on a bench. He holds the New York Post in front of him. Booger struggles to read out loud.

BOOGER

Jake Shuttlesworth, a con-vic-ted
mur-der-er was a fug-i-tive from
the law.

Sip grabs the paper from him.

SIP

Gimme the paper, you can't even
read and you're about to graduate.
Dumb ass.

BOOGER

Can too read, just have problems
reading out loud.

MANCE

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LONNIE

Sip, finish reading.

Sip reads.

SIP

The father of the number one
basketball prospect Jesus
Shuttlesworth was captured last
night in the Coney Island section
of Brooklyn, New York after a
weeklong manhunt. He had escaped
the maximum security Attica State
penitentiary seven days before. No
official word yet on how he
escaped.

BOOGER

That's a bullshit lie. How could
Jake have escaped when they let him
walk out the motherfucking front
gate?

SIP

Yeah, and how come he wasn't on
America's Most Wanted on the All
Points bulletin? I watch that show
every week.

BOOGER

You on that show, that's ya ass.
You get caught quick.

MANCE
But it's gotta be some truth to it
if it's in the papers.

BOOGER
C'mon, man. They flipped the
script.

EXT. ATTICA STATE PENITENTIARY - DAY 133

WE SEE ATTICA.

INT. JAKE'S CELL - DAY 134

Jake lies on his bed looking up at the ceiling with his son's clippings on it. WE SEE that his left arm is in a sling. Once again he's back in the hoosegow, the joint, sent back up the river, in his old cell, four walls, a cot and a backed up commode.

ANGLE - CELL

Prison Guard Books hits the cell door with his baton.

PRISON GUARD BOOKS
Shuttlesworth! The Warden wants to
see your ass now.

JAKE
Do you know what this is about?

ANGLE - CORRIDOR

Jake and his escort walk down a long, dark corridor. It looks like they are walking into a black hole.

INT. WARDEN WYATT'S OFFICE - DAY 135

CLOSE - PORTRAIT OF GOVERNOR PERNELL

The Governor frowns right down upon Jake.

ANGLE - OFFICE

Jake sits before Warden Wyatt.

WYATT
How's the arm?

JAKE
I'll live. At least it's not the
arm I shoot with.

WYATT
You could have been killed.

JAKE

This I know.

WYATT

I'm sorry things turned out the way it did for you but the jig is up. Jake, you're getting the 15 year maximum without parole. The Governor made a deal with you and you broke it. Now you must suffer the consequences. I'm sorry it turned out this way for you.

INT. JAKE'S CELL - DAY

136

Jake is back in his cell. He sits at the desk and writes a letter.

JAKE (VO)

Jesus, since you were 10 years old I've been pushing, pushing and pushing you to be the best ballplayer that you could possibly be.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - DAY

137

Sweetness shoots some basketballs and wins a giant Teddy bear for LaLa at the amusement park. He is romancing her, using his pimp psychology to the fullest and you best believe she will be the newest ho added to his stable. He kisses her long and hard.

JAKE (VO, contd)

I've finally come to the realization that ...

CUT TO:

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

138

WE DOLLY through the bus till we get to the back. Seated next to the window is Dakota.

CLOSE - DAKOTA

She looks out the window as the Midwest passes in front of her. She's gone. She's gone from her pimp Sweetness. She's gone from Coney Island.

JAKE (VO, contd)

... I was at the same time pushing you further and further away from me also.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

139

Booger is being tutored by a reading teacher. He's not struggling as much, he is making significant improvement.

JAKE (VO, contd)
My grandfather use to tell me that
you keep on trying on shoes, sooner
or later ...

INT. JESUS'S BIG STATE DORM ROOM - DAY

140

Jesus sits at his desk reading his letter from his father.

JAKE (VO, contd)
... you'll find a pair that fits.
Well I'm here to testify that I
found a pair and they hurt like hell.

CLOSE JESUS

JESUS
I love you. Your father Jake.

INT. BIG STATE'S ARENA - DAY

141

Jesus shoots all alone in the sparkling new 20,000 seat arena on the campus of Big State University. Shot after shot falls true into the net. SWISH. SWISH.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATTICA PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

142

Jake with his left arm in a sling nonetheless is shooting baskets also. He doesn't miss. SWISH. SWISH.

INT. BIG STATE'S ARENA - DAY

143

CLOSE - JESUS

He shoots. SWISH.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATTICA PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

144

CLOSE - JAKE

HE shoots. SWISH.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - JESUS

He's about to shoot when he suddenly stops. He feels something. Jesus senses a presence.

CUT TO:

ANGLE - JAKE

Jake shoots a 3 pointer. The shot misses, bounces hard off the rim and rolls to the foot of the prison wall. Jake walks to retrieve the ball. The Prison Guard in the tower starts to yell. He readies his high powered rifle but nonetheless Jake continues to the prison wall. The Prison Guard yells again.

PRISON GUARD

Stop right there. Turn around now. Do it or you're a dead man.

Jake doesn't stop.

CLOSE

Jake is in the bull's-eye, the crosshairs of the high powered rifle as he walks to the basketball.

CLOSE

Finger on trigger. He's about to squeeze off a shot.

ANGLE - JAKE

He picks up the basketball with his good right hand and throws it over the prison wall, high to the heavens.

CUT TO:

INT. BIG STATE'S ARENA - DAY

145

Jesus is about to shoot when a basketball comes flying down from the roof.

ANGLE - JESUS

He drops his ball and picks up the new basketball. Jesus looks around, no one is to be seen. He still is the only person in the empty arena.

CLOSE - JESUS

He looks up to the scoreboard, the roof, the heavens.

CUT TO WHITE.

THE END